

A · DAUGHTER · OF
NEW · FRANCE

· MARY · CATHERINE ·
· CROWLEY ·



A Daughter of New France



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A Daughter of New France

*With Some Account of the Gallant Sieur
Cadillac and his Colony on the Detroit*

By

Mary Catherine Crowley

Author of "The Heroine of the Strait," "Love Thrives
in War," etc.

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DEDICATION

*To all who love the romantic, chivalrous, and
hallowed traditions of our country and its sister-
land, this story of adventure, love, and loyalty
is dedicated*

Preface

TO-DAY, as the voyager from the Atlantic States, having sailed over the white-capped Lake Erie, enters upon the broad, shining expanse of the Detroit River, the Gateway of the North-West, he can scarcely fail to be impressed by the singular atmosphere of stillness which hangs over the Strait and invests the scene with a charm that has in it a quality of mystery.

Silently the commerce of the world passes through these Gates, — a tonnage greater, it is said, than that which annually leaves our seaboard ports; silently, save when in a deep-voiced call one heavily laden vessel greets or turns aside for another. The din of the city's marts, of the many industries along the strand, dies away at the waters' edge.

Silently, even as Time passes into Eternity, the great pleasure-steamer, too, and the light yachting-craft glide on; and it may be that the voyager, under the spell of the tranquil hour, queries to himself: "What were the thoughts, the emotions of the first civilized men who navigated this beautiful Strait, and found it to be the connecting chain of waters between

the Inland Oceans beyond, the Lower Lakes, and the Cataract of the Niagara? What manner of men were the hardy French-Canadians who colonized these productive shores? What was the personality of their bold and dashing leader? Who were the women, the wives of the settlers, who made the first homes in the old palisaded fort upon the river bank?"

These questions it is the object of this narrative to answer in part: to go back to the treasure-houses of French-Canadian history, Quebec and Montreal,—the former more especially; to sketch from its annals the society of the city of Champlain at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries; to picture the brilliant Gascon chevalier, who laid the foundations of our American city of Detroit, with his company of sturdy voyageurs, coureurs de bois, sons of proud seigneurs,—and the women who loved them and shared their fortunes.

A story woven from threads of reality, "A Daughter of New France" follows closely the historical and biographical records of the period and of later writers upon the subject, all available data having been carefully studied.

The authorities consulted include La Honton, the Cadillac Papers, the Jesuit Relations, Charlevoix, Margry, Le Moyne, Hennepin, the Chronicles of the Ursuline Convent, the Abbé Tanguay, Garneau, the Abbé Casgrain, Shea, Sheldon, and Parkman. The

author wishes to express her indebtedness also to the invaluable researches and articles upon the early history of Detroit by Mr. Clarence M. Burton, the Rev. Christian Denissen, and Mr. Richard R. Elliott; Farmer's History, Ross and Catlin's Landmarks of Detroit, Caroline Watson Hamlin's charming collection of legends, Bancroft, Lambert, Lanman, Campbell, Moore, and others.

Although the recital keeps to fact in all important points, "A Daughter of New France" claims, however, to be only a novel. Therefore the author asks that she be not taken to task by sage historians if in one or two minor instances she has availed herself of the novelist's privilege of romancing.

Dated from

"THE SPARROW'S PERCH UNDER THE EAVES,"

The first day of the Twentieth Century.

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A Daughter of New France

CHAPTER FIRST

"I AM FOUND WANTING"

IT happened one afternoon in the latter part of May, 1687. I, Denys Normand Guyon, a youth of eighteen, student and clerk, was at work in the book-room of the old Recollet Monastery at Quebec. The old monastery, I say, meaning not the fine edifice that looks out from its sanctuary of ancient trees upon the Place d'Armes, opposite to the new Château of St. Louis, but the first small home of the brothers of St. Francis, which was situated at the foot of the cliff, on the margin of the little River St. Charles.

My task was the copying of some manuscript notes upon the tongues of the Indian nations, set down by a Recollet missionary, after much painstaking observation and study, during his years of labor among the savages.

Usually I loved well the occupation, having a talent for the acquiring of languages and an ambition for the adventures of a life in the wilds, albeit no great longing to exchange my scalp for the crown of martyrdom, as the author of this aboriginal grammar had done. For he was most cruelly put to death by the treacherous Iroquois, notwithstanding his message of

peace and good-will, and his bones lie somewhere in the trackless forest, sepultured only by the leaves and mosses and the tangled vines of the wilderness.

Of this I could not help thinking as I conned the elegant characters upon the page before me, recalling the strange contrasts in the existence of this man, bred at the Court of France, and dying far from the haunts of civilization, a victim to savage hate and his own sublime zeal.

There was a fascination even in trying to imitate the lettering as closely as possible, and upon my readiness with the quill I prided myself not a little. But the more my thoughts dwelt upon the heroic Recollet, the oftener my gaze strayed through the window near to which I had carried my writing-table — to gain a better light, I told myself.

And yet there was need of no excuse to draw one to the contemplation of the scene that outstretched before me in the plain.

At the base of the gray rock of Quebec, and bordering the silver river, lay the blooming enclosure of the monastery where I was at work, the pleasing grounds of the Jesuits, and the Gardens of the Intendant's Palace. Beyond them extended wide meadows, and still farther to the west rose the dark forests, mysterious and impressive in their primeval repose.

On this May afternoon, now waxing late, the view seemed to me as a glimpse of paradise; for over all the landscape was the beauty of spring, and the rays of the setting sun shot golden arrows into the sombre woods, gilded the rude houses of the villages of Lorette and Charlesbourg across the river, and touched as with the blessing of a holy hand the lofty mountains of Bonhomme and Tsoumonthuan.

My father, Denys Guyon, a wealthy bourgeois, much respected in the town, had early married Elizabeth Boucher, a bright-eyed and thrifty Canadienne of his own rank in life. Being blessed with many sons and daughters, they, after the manner of the provident parents of New France in that day, laid out the future of these children according to their own best judgment, with but slight reference to the designs of Providence or the wishes of those most concerned, it appeared to me afterwards, although until within a few months of this memorable day I had not ventured, even in thought, to dispute their choice for myself.

Me they had from my childhood destined for the Church, not only because I early recognized the splendor and dignity of the sacred ritual, the music of the holy office, but because I had ever loved the beauties of Nature.

"Normand will be a priest and a missionary," they said.

Of a restless mind, eager for new ideas to feed upon, I took kindly to study, and dreamed many a dream of floating away down the St. Lawrence in a canoe manned by two hardy Algonquins, or of crossing the smiling plain whereon I now looked out, to plunge boldly into the forest, bearing the message of the Cross to the red man, who but awaited my coming to receive it with docility and faith.

In these visions there were pictures of peril, of strange lands and faces, of hardships, hunger, and cold; but, alack, among them all there was no dream of martyrdom!

On the contrary, of late, a doubt had sometimes crossed my mind as to whether there was in my soul a capability for so grand a mission as that for which

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I was designed; but until to-day I had always put away the question as a temptation from the Evil One.

Although my father had placed me with the Recollets, I had not yet been formally accepted by them, nor had I entered upon my theological studies; nevertheless, despite the occasional disquietude whereof I have spoken, I thought to continue to the end in the path my good parents had selected for me.

My work forgotten, I continued staring out upon, yet only half seeing, the beautiful panorama lying before me in the sunshine. So absorbed was I in my reflections, that I took no notice of the entrance of some one into the shadowy room, until close beside me a rich voice, reproving but not unduly stern, said, —

“Dreaming again, Normand?”

I started, and pushing the table from me, rose to my feet, crimsoning at having been thus caught dallying, and by Frère Constantin, who in mild firmness, virtue, and charm of manner ever seemed to me the living, breathing spirit of the blessed Francis of Assisi himself.

On this occasion his smile assured me that my fault was not past condoning, and with his hand upon my shoulder, as a real brother might caress a younger, he drew me to the window once more.

A love of Nature is, indeed, a characteristic of the sons of the gentle saint who was wont to hold converse with the birds and fishes, and the creatures of the field, — and in this respect at least, I am glad to think, I was not altogether unfitted to be numbered among his followers.

“The heavens and earth declare the glory of

God," murmured Frère Constantin, softly. "Tell me, boy, whither has your roving fancy sped to-day?"

At his words of indulgence my diffidence gave way. I am naturally of a reserved temperament, but he was and has ever been one of my heroes; furthermore, I was much wrought up over the remembrance of the murdered Recollet, the manuscript of whose scholarly legacy to the monastery was still as fresh as when it came from his hands.

Therefore, casting constraint to the winds, I poured out my heart, with all its misgivings and fears, to my kind friend.

"I am glad you have told me this, Normand," said he, when I had finished, "for upon this very subject I am sent to speak to you. Do not fancy that the lack you have noted in yourself has escaped the watchful eyes of those in whose hands your future has been to a certain extent placed. You know that in the selection of recruits for a regiment the most assiduous care is observed to choose those who are stalwart and strong, brave and amenable to rigid discipline, that the troops of the king may be invincible. Especially is this true of those sent out from the Old World to encounter the rigors of the climate and the perils of savage warfare here in New France. Do you think there is less solicitude bestowed in the selection of the soldiers of the King of Kings? No, my Normand, far from it. Now, you are a fair student, and you love our revered traditions; but this affection, it has been noted, is rather the romantic love of a poet than the zeal of a votary. Your disposition is too dreamy and inclined to melancholy; and though, thanks to your fondness for the winter sports of our Canadian youth and the summer pastimes of boating, bathing, and fishing, you have the frame

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suiting to a missionary, yet I fear me your strong right hand grasps more eagerly at the sword than at the Cross. Moreover, grave and quiet as you are, it has been remarked that even during the Sunday services, Normand, your glance has been wont to stray somewhat toward the young demoiselles, the pupils of the Ursulines, who by reason of the recent havoc wrought by fire in the Convent Chapel come to our church for the grand Mass; also, that you do not altogether shun the society of those, among these same bright-eyed, merry maidens of New France, who as companions of your sister and cousins are to be met with sometimes in your home. Ah, Normand, Normand, the love of a good woman is a gracious gift and to many a man it has meant salvation," continued Frère Constantin abstractedly; and his thoughts, I surmised, flew back to an episode of his own youth whereof I had heard report, and which I will set down later.

"Yes, a noble gift," he went on earnestly, "and it behooves him who seeks, to guard worthily the treasure when once he has won it. But what has a missionary to do with the treasures of earth, boy? He must be shackled by no human tie, — to him alone it is given to follow as perfectly as mere human nature can, the life of Christ.

"Do not misunderstand me, lad. I have no mind to take you to task upon the matters I have mentioned, — although such distractions at the services of the Church are most unseemly, — but I would point out that the turn of a straw shows from what quarter is the wind, and whither it will carry the chaff as well as the seed. In brief, my dear Normand, I am sent to tell you that for the life to which you have aspired you have no calling."

For a moment I stood as one dazed, stupidly regarding the commanding figure of the priest, — my friend, as I even then felt assured. My heart seemed turned to ice; scarcely could I credit that I had heard aright.

"I thought it but just to inform you of this decision before it is conveyed to monsieur your father and madame your excellent mother," he concluded gravely, as I did not speak.

Then, all at once, the chill in my breast became as fire, and my soul was swept by a torrent of emotion as tempestuous as the current of La Chine. How petty now appeared my ignoble shrinking from the life of zeal for which I had been bred, my foolish turning aside from the fair ideal even for an instant! Alas, how true is the saying "Happiness is composed of so many pieces that one is always missing"!

Now, as the destiny marked out for me by my parents receded from me, I would have been willing to die to obtain it.

That the decision was irrevocable, I well knew, however, and turning to the spot where lately I had been at work, — it now seemed to me so happily, — I flung myself into the chair, and bending over the table rested my head upon my arms and burst into tears.

How often one may do more good by his sympathy than even by his toil!

"Poor boy!" exclaimed Father Constantin, compassionately laying a gentle hand upon my hair, which little Barbe was wont to say was as thick as the fur of her pelisse. "Poor boy! It is natural you should grieve to see your life's ambition swept away with as short warning as comes the springtime flood of our great river. Let this console you, in no

grave matter are you to blame. For the talent God has not given, He will not ask an account. As to your disappointment, — the gem cannot be perfected without friction, nor the man without trials; and the voyageurs, you know, have a saying, 'Every one must row with the oars he has.' "

Having essayed thus to comfort me, my good friend went away, divining that I would rather be alone to face as best I might the new idea of my future thus unexpectedly presented to me.

For a time I remained as he had left me, sunk in despondency. I had been weighed in the balance and had been found wanting!

It was not a pleasant revelation, and presently I began to ask myself with some perturbation what my father would say to it all.

Denys Guyon was known to be a stern and determined man, quickly moved to anger if his will was thwarted in the least degree.

Would he believe I was not to blame? Rather, would he not visit upon me the displeasure of his disappointment? And my mother, — how it chagrined me to blight her fondest hopes!

Nevertheless, "youth and white paper soon take an impression;" ere long I was in imagination writing out the plan of my life afresh and finding an interest in the doing; for I was again in dreams the hero of adventures strange and wonderful, a hero in a different garb and guise.

Lost in this new reverie, I did not notice the lapse of time until the deepening of the shadows in the long room reminded me that the calm May twilight had come.

I rose with a sigh, gathered up the priceless *Recollet* manuscript, returned it to its envelope of birch

bark, locked it in the cupboard in the wall reserved for similar treasures, and carried the key to the librarian, whom I found in his cell at the end of the corridor. Then, taking my cap, I went out into the dusk, and home.

Our house would not be considered of much pretension nowadays (1735), yet it was as important as any of those which at that time clustered about the gardens and palace of the Intendant, the Bishop's residence, or the Convent of the Ursulines; for my father was one of the most prosperous merchants of Quebec.

Because of the fires frequent along the river bank, he had built, on the street of St. Pierre in the Lower Town, a two-story dwelling of stone, rough as taken from the rock. The exterior wall, even at the north, was unplastered, which gave it, many said, an unfinished air. This rugged appearance I preferred, however,—an oddity of taste that my good mother and sisters could not understand, as also others I might name. Within doors, the first floor was taken up with warehouses, wherein were piled to the beams the rich furs of the otter, beaver, and silver fox, the pelts of the bear, the wolf, and the buffalo, which had been floated down in canoes from the wilderness of the Northwest; here also were sold at intervals the shimmering satins, brocades, and other goods that came in the ships from France or were brought by my uncle Guyon as spoils from the sea.

Above, we lived; and although being so numerous a family we were somewhat crowded, still this home was not incommodious, since we had moreover a large garden wherein grew cherry and other trees and fragrant shrubs. Here during the mild weather we spent many hours; for the people of New France

love to pass the too brief summer in the open air, whereas in winter 't is ever "the smaller the cote the snugger the birds."

This evening, upon reaching the house, I found the family at the supper-table. I remember well there were served at the meal the "galettes au beurre," or fine bread, that I liked, and dainty "croquecignoles," to which delicious little cakes I also had ever done full justice.

To-night I had so light relish for them that my mother remarked upon my want of appetite. My father throughout the repast was silent and pre-occupied. At first I wondered with alarm if he had already received the communication relating to me from Father Constantin; but as he rose to go out, I heard him say to "la bonne mère" that he had just bought a rich cargo of goods from his brother at Beauport, the freight of a galleon captured on the Spanish Main.

Thereafter the interest of my mother seemed for the time engrossed by this purchase. No doubt she was planning how to induce the prudent man to reserve a fair number of lengths of the silk stuffs for her daughters, with perchance a gold chain in addition for herself, notwithstanding the demand there would be when it became known that a new supply of fine fabrics and trinkets of novel style and workmanship were to be obtained in the town.

It was not a favorable hour to broach so unwelcome a topic as my dismissal by the Recollets and the frustration of all her designs for me.

"If Thérèse were only here," I muttered under my breath. Yet even so, would not she also have been too dazzled by the glamour of the gay apparel in prospect, to spare me any but a wandering attention, did

I attempt to whisper to her my story? Nevertheless, it was ever to this sweet sister — two years younger than myself, but the oldest daughter of my parents — that I was wont to come with my confidences, sure of a ready sympathy and much good counsel. And 't was she who knew me better than any one else, unless, perhaps, Frère Constantin.

But Thérèse (Marie Thérèse) was away on a visit to Beauport, at the home of our uncle François Guyon, from whom my father had bought the goods intended by the shippers for the Court of Spain.

I missed her; I missed the musical laughter of the merry-hearted demoiselles her companions who were wont to gather about her in our garden under the cherry-trees, — a company I was sometimes not loath to join, though how news of this reached the ears of the Recollets I know not.

Seeking distraction from my own thoughts, I went out into the street. On the whole, I was glad there was no need to disclose to any one the change in my expectations that night.

CHAPTER SECOND

AT THE WIDOW ST. ARMAND'S

FOR a time I strolled idly, loitered beneath the trees that line the battery at the edge of the river, and then continued across the Market Place and on without object through the narrow streets of the Lower Town.

The strong magazines where the merchants housed their peltries, stores, and casks of brandy, were shrouded in gloom below, but twinkled with lights above when, as was usually the case, the dwelling of the proprietor was under the same roof as the storehouse. There was, besides, plenty of life in the quarter, for the wine-shops were all open and, as ever, doing a thriving business.

Not all of these cabarets, or public houses, were low drinking-places, however; a number were "cercles," or meeting-rooms of the raconteurs and wits of the day. Here the privateer told of his wondrous adventures on the high seas; the members of the famous regiment of Carignan-Sallières recalled their happy life in Old France, or narrated their exploits in the campaign against the Turks. Here, at times, even an official of the civil government so far unbent his dignity as to taste of a wine of rare vintage, obtained very possibly from the plunder of an enemy's ships; or, if nothing better offered, here he condescended to pass judgment upon a particularly fine grade of Canadian "eau de vie."

As I passed the Widow St. Armand's, a shop of this better class, a glimpse of the company within caused me to pause before the door, which was set open because of the mildness of the evening, and also the more to attract customers.

A party of officers from the fort were seated at the first of the tables. Before each stood one of the brightly burnished goblets in which the wine was served, and they were telling stories. I entered quietly, took a seat in a corner, and for an excuse to remain, ordered a measure of cider.

Among the group whose presence had attracted me were Lieutenant Jacques Sabrevois of Captain Desquénac's company, whom I knew as a suitor for the hand of my sister Thérèse, and his friend De la Parelle.

They spoke aloud, as not caring who might hear; and their talk and badinage was of so general a character that I did not scruple being an auditor, the less since they could see I was there and might moderate their tone if they wished.

As I lingered thus, unwilling to go home lest the inevitable scene with my father might come that night after all, in the doorway, of a sudden appeared a remarkable figure, at whose entrance I sprang up, and then fell back in my place, my eyes riveted upon the newcomer in a species of fascination.

The new guest crossed the room with an impatient stride, and, seating himself at a table apart from the others, called for a cup of wine in the imperious tone of one whose temper has been ruffled and not with impunity by the offender.

Even in those days of strange Indian apparitions from the forest, of half-savage coureurs de bois, and gayly garbed habitants, of gorgeously apparelled civil

and military functionaries and richly vested ecclesiastics, even in those days I had never beheld so picturesque a personality.

The stranger was a man of some twenty-six years of age, a trifle above the middle height, but of so commanding an aspect as to appear taller. His well-developed physique was displayed to perfection by his blue uniform, which was that of a lieutenant; instead of a peruke, he wore his own hair loose and unpowdered, and as he cast upon the table his cavalier's hat adorned with a long white feather, I noted how shapely was the head set upon the broad square shoulders.

His complexion was swarthy, betokening a Gascon origin, and I should have said at the time that his eyes were black, but I afterwards knew them to be of the color and glint of steel, and very keen and piercing. He presented in many points a contrast to the officers at the other table, particularly to Sabrevois, who was a military exquisite given to posing before the demoiselles of the distinguished society of the town, until of late he had fixed upon my sister Thérèse as the object of his amorous devotion.

Being, as I learned later, slightly acquainted with the solitary guest, and no doubt wishing to convey an impression of his own importance, Sabrevois accosted him.

"My friend, Quebec is new to you," he called loftily from the end of the room near the door. "Come with us and we will show you the sights of the town."

The invitation was fair enough, but the accents were those of a too familiar raillery; moreover, the speech was greeted by an untimely laugh from his

companions, who had begun to wax jocund from the effects of the wine they had drunk.

For answer the foreign officer vouchsafed the coxcomb merely a scowl, and turning away his gaze, looked into his goblet, indifferent to the presence of any one in the room; yes, indifferent even to the admiring glances of the handsome Widow St. Armand, the charming "*marchande de vins*," who, albeit a most exemplary woman, was wont to enhance the bouquet of her wines by smiles the most bewitching and coquetry the most beguiling, yet solely in a general way and with a cool eye to the prosperity of her business.

"So ho! monsieur lieutenant!" cried Sabrevois, angry that his offer should be thus ignored. "Manifestly it is not from the Court of France you come with such manners; and the same are additional evidence that you are an alien in Quebec. *Here*, it may be a kindness to inform you, we are somewhat more formal and gracious of address."

Every word of this satirical outburst was intended to cut like a sword-thrust.

While thus giving expression to his resentment, the speaker had risen and now stood facing the still silent stranger with the scornful air of a gamecock, as he flecked an imaginary speck of dust from his costly coat with his lace-bordered handkerchief, and waved his hat plume downward in an elaborately ironical bow, as though preparatory to departure.

The chevalier whom this display of elegance and haughtiness was meant to disconcert, had shifted his position and was now surveying the petulant Sabrevois with an amused smile.

"Thanks, monsieur, for your disinterested counsel, and, withal, your courteous invitation," he conde-

scended to say at last, with mocking politeness; "but I would not venture to stroll with you through the town in the moonlight, lest I might thereby be put at too great disadvantage. Were I Captain Desquénac, — if my memory fails me not, you were presented to me as belonging to his command, — were I Captain Desquénac, I should feel compelled to confine you to your quarters at the fort."

"And wherefore, pray may I ask?" demanded Sabrevois, thrown off his guard by the other's nonchalance.

"Wherefore?" repeated the officer, who was unknown to me. "Because I would not think it safe to have so gallant a coxcomb strutting about among the ladies. You are much too dangerous a rival for the favor of the fair sex to be permitted to go at large, my brave lieutenant."

"Sacré! If you had a lady love, monsieur, I should of a surety outrival you," broke out Sabrevois, with new fury.

"That he would," interjected the young Marquis de Parelle; "and you would never have the wit to perceive it until given your dismissal by the fair one."

"Wit? Pardon, that is your inheritance, I presume, my good marquis," retorted their adversary forthwith, also starting up; and to Sabrevois he added with a sneer: "As for you, my friend, hero as I understand you are among the demoiselles and petted by the Intendant, and although I am alone and you are supported by your companions, I am tempted to give you the thorough thrashing whereof you are so sadly in need. But alack, even thus enforced, I fear you are too weak for my prowess."

"This to me, the best athlete in the Carignan regi-

ment!" stormed Sabrevois. "A thrashing from you or any one! In faith, you will find me worthy of my name; you shall not only *see* but feel my sabre;" and he snatched it forth with a flourish.

At the same instant the blade of the stranger flashed in his hand.

The Widow St. Armand screamed and sped to the door.

"Hold, hold, Monsieur de la Mothe," cried De la Parelle, rushing between the two excited men, while his comrades tried to pull Sabrevois away. "Hold, or we shall all be court-martialed."

He who had been called De la Mothe let his sword fall back in its scabbard, finding that he was to have no chance to use it.

Protected by the others, Sabrevois, however, continued to hurl invectives and insulting epithets at him.

Chafing because he could not get at his antagonists, the stranger chevalier stood beside the table. Thereon, close at his hand, was set a heavy copper candlestick in which lights were burning. Beside himself with rage, and on the impulse of the moment, he caught up the massive piece of metal and hurled it at the head of the foppish lieutenant.

Sabrevois fell to the floor with a groan, and the room was left in darkness.

As the lights went out, I had seen the Marquis spring toward De la Mothe, but the latter must have eluded him. There was an authoritative call for candles, and the confusion was enhanced by the moans of the wounded man.

From their voices I knew that the party were still between me and the door, gathered about their fallen comrade. In another moment a light would be

struck, or the widow, having raised an alarm in the neighborhood, would lead the watch hither with their lanterns.

To me no one had paid any heed from the beginning. My opportunity was now come, however. Near me I heard a sound as of some one breathing.

Although I heartily disliked Sabrevois, I had no wish to see him murdered. Nevertheless, he had provoked the altercation and the odds had been against the stranger.

Moreover, so strong was the attraction which this mysterious De la Mothe had already begun to exert upon me, that I could not let pass the occasion to serve him.

Again came that deep respiration, as of a lion at bay.

"Monsieur," I whispered very low, stealing along by the wall to the spot whence the sound came, "there is an exit in the rear; come with me, I beg of you."

I stretched out my hand; it touched his sleeve. He drew back, but I clung to him with silent persistency; and he yielded after a second, yet almost as one humors a child.

By groping along the side of the room, I led him swiftly to a door which opened upon a little passage connecting with a narrow street behind that whereon the shop faced; for who knows better than I the rambling, climbing lanes as well as the more pretentious thoroughfares of the old town of Quebec?

Whether the officers had a knowledge of this exit I cannot say; but if so, in the commotion they must have forgotten it. We got away without being intercepted. Still in silence I guided the stranger by a

circuitous route, until we had put half a mile between us and the scene of the quarrel.

At length, being a few paces in advance, I waited for him to come up with me, and then turning said, —

“Monsieur, will you come home with me? There is a summer-house in our garden where you can lie concealed for a brief interval, or while we contrive a way to get you to the house of my uncle, François Guyon, at Beauport; thence you may obtain transportation to some port where you will be in no danger from the friends of the man down yonder.”

At the mention of my uncle's name, I thought the chevalier started, but when I had finished speaking he broke into a laugh.

“Ha, ha! You are a stanch youth,” he exclaimed. “How it comes that I have unexpectedly found so loyal an adherent I do not know, but your friendly act in disentangling me from an unpleasant dilemma I gratefully acknowledge and hope I may have the good fortune to requite some day. Yet do not imagine I have killed the coxcomb; he cried out much too lustily for that. I aimed but to graze his features, and perchance have marred them a bit for the nonce and spoiled his fine coat, since such as he bleed easily at the nose. As for flight? Nonsense! I will go to my lodgings, where I can be found if I am wanted. Even the unenviable notoriety of a fray in a wine-shop is preferable to sneaking away like a poltroon. Nevertheless, boy, I am as much in your debt as though the matter were graver. Accept my thanks, I will not forget you.” He clasped my hand warmly. “So François Guyon is your uncle! My compliments to him when you see him again. Good-night.”

And with a light laugh he started up the street, waving me an adieu as he went, and troling a stanza of "La jolie Canadienne" as unconcernedly as though that massive candlestick had been but a feather-weight.

CHAPTER THIRD

THE STRANGER CHEVALIER

IT was as I anticipated. The next day, when word came to my father that I had not the qualities to fit me for a good Recollet, he stormed and well-nigh cursed me, declaring that henceforth he washed his hands of me, I might choose my own future, — a declaration whereat in my heart I rejoiced, albeit I felt he was unduly harsh, since how could I be accountable for what Providence had not given me?

I had previously mustered courage to tell my mother of my dismissal, and all day her eyes showed only too plainly a redness caused by frequent weeping. But at the first stern word from my father she forgave me for the disappointment I had occasioned her, and spoke for me, pleading my cause against his wrath, as a mother, Heaven bless her, is ever wont to shield her son, however unworthy he may be. With these concerns of my own to the fore, I had small leisure to speculate upon the outcome of the last night's quarrel at the shop of the Widow St. Armand.

Still the thought of it did cross my mind many times. I wondered if the lieutenant was badly hurt, and whether the chevalier, whom I had heard named De la Mothe, remained boldly at his lodgings, or if upon second consideration he had concluded to make good his escape while there was yet opportunity.

But for the unhappiness I had already brought to my mother, I thought to inform her of the adventure;

yet, so unreasonable are women, would she not in that case take me to task for having to do with a wine brawl? I held my peace, therefore. However, by noon the town was ringing with the story of the encounter. The rumor quickly followed that the condition of Sabrevois was serious and the stranger officer had been arrested and was to be brought before a court-martial on the morrow.

In the evening my father ignored me, but I fancied I detected a darker cloud upon his brow, and my mother sighed frequently as though there were a new sorrow in her heart.

I preserved a quiet though perchance somewhat sullen exterior, yet my blood grew hot in my veins. I understood that my parents were grieved and anxious on account of what had befallen Sabrevois, whom, because of his family connections and favor with those in authority, and also because he had a fair income besides his pay as an officer, they were willing to accept as a son-in-law.

In a savage humor I slipped away at last to the sleeping-room which I shared with my younger brothers. Fortunately for my frame of mind, they were already well on the voyage to dreamland; where is the active lad who, as soon as his head touches the pillow, is not launched upon a repose as profound as that of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus?

For me, I was a care-free lad no longer, but a youth perplexed as to how I should acquire my independence, pained at the thought that if Sabrevois recovered, Thérèse, against her inclination but from a sense of filial duty, might be constrained to marry him, and haunted by a dread lest, if Sabrevois did not recover, misfortune might befall the man who,

although I did not then know it, was to influence my future through happiness and trial.

Thus wakeful, I tossed upon my bed. As I was indeed young, however, and in perfect health, slumber came at last, and I dreamed I had set out with the Chevalier de la Mothe for the ends of the earth, bidding adieu forever to my boyhood's home and the storm-beaten Rock of Quebec.

Hard by his residence my father had another warehouse wherein were stored the iron implements, the corn, flax, eau de vie, wines, and other commodities in which he dealt. Here he spent much time, as also on the Esplanade, where the merchants were often wont to meet their customers. On the day following that whereon he had appeared so troubled, he came home with a more hopeful air.

"There is more encouraging news," he announced to my mother; "the wound of our friend the lieutenant is no longer deemed serious, though the surgeons say he will carry the scar to his dying day. His assailant has been sentenced to a term of imprisonment in the fort. A pretty fracas, truly."

"Ay, ay," agreed "la bonne mère," with a nod of the head, yet she grew forthwith the cheerier.

I too breathed freer that Sabrevois' summons had not yet come, but it was, I fear, principally because his taking leave of the world at this time might have embarrassed the chevalier who had so unceremoniously stepped into my life as its hero.

But, *sacré*, had not Sabrevois nearly done his worst, as it was? Here was my grand chevalier shut up in the citadel, for no one could tell how long, unless it might occur to the Governor, the Sieur Denonville, to inquire into the matter. And why was it, after all,

but for a slight misunderstanding, whereof Sabrevois had taken a mean advantage; since, had his head been harder and his bray less loud, and had his friends not raised such a cry, there would have been an end of the matter.

And now, here was the court-martial! I pictured the bold De la Mothe facing his military judges, as I had seen him, — in his dashing uniform and high riding-boots, in his hand his broad-brimmed hat, its long feather sweeping the ground; the Chevalier de la Mothe, haughty, scornful, hearing his sentence with an air of arrogant indifference. And then I thought of him as eating his heart out from inactivity in the donjon of the fortress.

For days I haunted the shadow of the palisades, revolving in my mind various schemes to effect his release, yet forced to abandon one after another as too wild to admit of successful execution.

My time was my own, since my father continued to ignore me as one under the ban of his displeasure. These strained relations could not be long endured, however, and I was resolved to cut loose from all old associations and set out to make my own way in the world. How and where? — that was the question.

Such was the state of affairs when one day “la bonne mère” said to me, —

“Normand, it is your father’s wish that you ride out to Beauport and bring home Thérèse.” This was the first glad happening for a week.

“Surely, mother, I will go at once,” I answered with alacrity, and began forthwith to make preparation.

In the stable I found the bay horse Feu Follet champing in his stall, and as ready for the journey as I. Bridling and saddling him, I added a pillion for Thérèse and the saddle-bags, knowing full well that

"la bonne mère" would have some dainties to send to my aunt by way of neighborly remembrance.

Nor was I mistaken, for, when I rode around to the door, there she stood on the step, in her hands a great platter of tempting croquecignoles. These I bestowed with care in one of the bags, and a bottle of eau de vie for my uncle in the other. Then I sprang upon the back of Feu Follet and gave him the word to be off.

It was well on to noon as I rode out through the St. John's Gate of the town into the open country. Behind me lay the crooked line of the city wall, the green turf and poplars of the Esplanade, and the gray buildings of Quebec, among which stood out prominently upon Mountain Hill the officers' quarters, the Hôtel Dieu, and the Bishop's new college with its shining belfry.

Before me extended the green slopes that descend to the Beauport Road; beyond them I could see the cleft in the ledge of rock whence falls the fleecy cascade, like a fair bridal veil for virgin Nature, and beyond it my glance travelled to Cap Tourmente and the blue mountains of Ste. Anne.

Having crossed the winding St. Charles, I went on contentedly. The beauty of the scene rendered the jaunt delightful; but the ground was bad and my progress slow, notwithstanding that Feu Follet, good beast, chafed for a gallop and broke into one whenever I gave him the rein. At length, after much hard riding, I descried in the valley the chimneys of my uncle's home, and in a few minutes more I drew up before the most spacious farmhouse of the côte, or settlement.

At my call of "Ho là, ho!" there were hurried steps within, and presently the door was thrown open

by Robert de Reaume, the ward of François Guyon, who at this time lived with him at Beauport.

"Ah, Normand, it is indeed you, I thought I could not be mistaken in the voice," he cried joyfully, hastening to catch at the bridle of Feu Follet that I might dismount the sooner. "What a gala time we shall have together! Your uncle Guyon has brought in a ship, as you must have heard; we will go aboard her to-morrow. Oh, there is much to show you!"

At his exclamation of recognition there had followed him to the door a little girl of some nine or ten springtimes. It was Barbe, the pretty English child.

Hers was a strange history. As well as we could learn it, her father was slain while fighting the Indians during an attack upon some border village, his wife ruthlessly murdered by the savages. Doubtless their little one would have shared the same fate, had not an Indian brave taken thought that he might perchance barter the toddling pale-face baby for a draught of French brandy. Of him my aunt had bought her to save her life.

But of all this winsome Babette retained no recollection beyond an instinctive shrinking from any face of coppery hue, and now, as she stood on the house-step, clapping her hands and dancing with glee, no one would have supposed that over the dawn of her life hung so terrible a tragedy.

"Oh, welcome, Normand," she cried. "I shall be so glad to show you where the violets and arbutus and the virgin's bower are coming into bloom; and my fairy palace lined with moss, in a crevice of the cliff: you must see, too, the string of gold-beads that father Guyon brought home to me."

I sprang from the saddle and, bending down, kissed the sweet mouth which little Barbe held up to me in ingenuous affection; and then, as she clung to me, taking another dancing step or two the while, I turned to grasp the hand of Robert, saying, —

“In truth nothing would please me better than to remain with you for a time; to see the new ship and go canoeing on the river, Robert; to take you upon a hunt for wild-flowers, Barbe, and note how every day your golden beads gleam prettier upon your pretty throat. But unfortunately I cannot stay. I am come to bring Thérèse home.”

“Alack, your errand is like to temper the warmth of your reception within,” replied Robert with a laugh, whereby he strove to conceal his own disappointment. “Thérèse has been the life of the house, and François Guyon says he is minded to keep her always as his daughter. With ‘la bonne mère’ it is the same, since your sister is the one age of the daughter whom they lost by death, and the house is lonely without the younger demoiselles, who, as you know, will not return from the school of the Ursulines for some weeks yet.”

At my explanation of the why and wherefore of my coming, Babette had ceased to skip; but she still hung fast to my hand as I wheeled about to go in.

My entrance was impeded, however, by the appearance of my two small boy cousins who came rushing around the corner of the building from the farmyard and cast themselves upon me. I could only free myself from the exuberance of their greeting by diverting their attention to Feu Follet, whom Robert still held by the bridle. At this juncture, too, the sagacious animal, as if to urge his own claim to

their notice, began to whinny for the rest and pleasant shelter of the stable.

The lads broke into a merry laugh at his wisdom, snatched the rein from Robert, and led the horse away with a chanson of triumph, as if it had been the charger of his Majesty, while I went into the house with Reaume and Barbe.

"Hein, Normand, 'tis good for the eyes to see you," cried my uncle Guyon from his chair by the fire, as he took his pipe from his mouth and held out a hand to me in his bluff hearty way. "Come, sit down and recount to us the doings of Quebec. Ma mie" (to his wife), "have you ordered dinner for the lad? What a likely gallant he is become, to be sure!"

"Ay, such as I always said he would be!" declared my aunt, who had risen from her place to greet me and was bustling about with hospitable thought for my refreshment, the family having already dined.

As a matter of fact, I was not in general ill-pleased with my own appearance. Although I was but a youth and little used to the ways of the high society of our good town, my habiliments had always been of the best, for it was a pride with my father that the habiting of his family should be an evidence of his prosperity. I knew also that I was well built of frame, and tall for one of French stock, with olive skin, brown eyes, and a shock of wavy black hair which I had been thinking, as I rode along the way, I would begin to wear powdered and tied in a queue.

Now, beyond a momentary consciousness of satisfaction at the impression I had made, I gave no consideration to myself at all, but stood in the middle of the floor as though rooted to the spot, so over-

whelmed was I with astonishment by the scene upon which I gazed.

At first, upon coming in with my thoughts intent on the meeting with my uncle and aunt, I saw only them. But directly, as I turned about to look for Thérèse, lo, there she was, busied with her embroidery at the other side of the fireplace, and, wonder of wonders! there, bending over her, was the self-same chevalier whose imprisonment I had lamented for the past week, — the stranger of the wine-shop, looking as dashing and picturesque, and handsomer even than when I had first seen him, for now his brow was unclouded and his eyes shone with a soft steady light, — the hero of my nightly visions and of my waking dreams, the mysterious Monsieur de la Mothe.

“How now, Normand!” exclaimed my uncle François, at a loss to account for my bewilderment. “Ah, I was like to forget, — you are a stranger to our guest. *Sieur Cadillac*, this is my brother’s son, a worthy lad, maugre, not good enough, it seems, to make a missionary.”

Thus I discovered that the intelligence of my dismissal from the *Recollets* had preceded me hither, — so swiftly does ill news travel.

Discomfited and ashamed at his blurting it out in this manner, I shifted my cap from one hand to the other, wishing that, to hide my confusion, the floor might turn to a billowy sea and, opening, engulf me.

But he to whom François Guyon had given the title of *Sieur Cadillac*, he, — the stranger whom I knew as the *Chevalier de la Mothe*, — with that strange power of attraction which was peculiar to him, forced me to meet the look he fixed upon me.

Then straightway his countenance broke into a smile so winning that in my ardent, foolish boy's heart I felt as though I could fall down and worship him.

As it was, I only stammered out some incoherent reply as, striding forward, he grasped my hand, crying, —

“Pardon, friend Guyon, I must gainsay you. The young gentleman and I have not only met ere now, but I am in debt to him for a most timely service. This gallant nephew of yours is the youth who so opportunely interposed the other evening, with the amiable purpose of saving my life or that of the imbecile Sabrevois, I scarce know which.”

“Of a surety not Sabrevois!” I rejoined so vehemently that they all laughed; whereupon, more at ease, I shot a glance toward Thérèse, and as my eyes met hers I read there a pride in me that they had never shown me before.

“Eh! Is it indeed so?” ejaculated my uncle, incredulous, yet well pleased to be assured that I had so distinguished myself; while my aunt paused in her kindly preparations for my entertainment to stare at me in undisguised amazement.

Manifestly they were familiar with the story of what had transpired on that notable evening at the wine-shop of the Widow St. Armand.

“And now, my faithful and most unlooked for ally,” continued my chevalier, in a bantering tone under which nevertheless I discerned a ring of earnestness, “do you wonder how it is that, instead of languishing in your Bastile of New France, the donjon of yonder grim Castle of St. Louis, as you perchance supposed me, I am here, a guest at François Guyon's hospitable fireside, and

occupied after a fashion so eminently agreeable to my inclinations?"

He bowed to my sister with a courtliness and grace which I have never seen surpassed, and turning again to me, proceeded with his former debonair gayety,—

"Bah, my Normand, you have yet to learn that a cask of Spanish sack is often a most eloquent advocate with the powers that be. As for my presence here, your good uncle Guyon can tell you, we have braved the perils of the deep together with the laudable object of upholding the majesty of the King upon the high seas, and, at the same time, furthering our own fortunes. This voyage, I am come from my home in fair Acadia, drawn hither by tidings of a treasure compared to which all the wealth that sails the ocean is as nothing; and, in sooth, the report, alluring as it was, fell far short of the reality."

Again his gaze sought Thérèse, who blushed rosy red, and bowed her head lower over her tambour frame.

For the nonce anger got the better of my admiration of the man. Who was this stranger that upon a few days' acquaintance ventured to pay such bold court to the prettiest demoiselle of Quebec?

Did he only trifle? Was this but a jest of love-making? If so — My hand sought the rapier I had worn, with a longing to find it of use, since the day following that whereon it was decided I had no calling for the rôle of messenger of peace.

The Chevalier de la Mothe noted the action and also the frown upon my brow, but he returned my look of defiant interrogation with one so frank and noble that I felt my boyish fierceness soften.

"Ah, Normand, you are a brave gallant," he said, with the easy indulgent laugh of one who is master of the situation, "but I trust our swords may never be turned against each other. At least, if it ever comes to pass, I swear 'twill not be through fault of mine."

Thereupon he turned away, as though to resume with the fair worker beside the hearth the conversation that my entrance had interrupted.

"Thérèse, I am come for you," I interposed gruffly, not yet entirely appeased.

Thérèse, who had smiled a greeting to me when I came in, now started up, coloring with vexation and annoyance.

I knew at once that I had blundered, yet what was I to do but deliver the message wherewith I had been commissioned?

"It is my father's wish that you return with me," I snapped out brusquely.

"Then I had best go at once," she replied with dignity, making as if to set about immediate preparations to obey the behest.

My uncle Guyon protested. "What bêtise is this?" cried he. "The command of my brother Denys meant no such haste. Normand was delayed on the way by reason of the bad state of the roads; you cannot get back by nightfall. To-morrow, my dear niece, if so it must be, you have my permission to go, but not before."

"Ay, that is it," seconded my aunt; while little Barbe laid her soft cheek against my hand, well content that they should carry the day. But Thérèse, turned contrary, would not have it so.

"Oh, I beg of you, my uncle, let me go now, since I am sent for," she pleaded. "My father will not

take the excuse of the bad roads, since the twilight is long; if we start betimes, we shall get home by seven of the clock."

"Well, well, I dare say you are wise not to anger my brother," said François Guyon, yielding, "and I know you will be coming again to Beauport very shortly."

At this she blushed again; as for Monsieur de la Mothe, he said no more to me, but stood studying the fire. Betimes, after telling my sister in a low voice that he would return to put her on her pillion (a most absurd care, to my mind), he called to Robert and set out with him for the ship at the wharf, whereon, I learned, he lived when at Beauport.

Angry as I was against this Chevalier de la Mothe, when I saw Reaume go forth with him thus as his chosen companion, I was conscious of a pang of jealousy almost such, I fear, as a girl feels when she sees the lover whom she has enthroned in her heart prefer the society of another. But this emotion I checked, albeit it caused me to apply myself with the greater sullenness to the meal which the Pani woman servant had set forth for me on the table at the farther end of the room.

François Guyon having been called away to his fields without hearing the minor bits of town news I possessed, and for which he had kindly feigned to be so anxious, and Thérèse having disappeared, taking Barbe with her on the plea that she needed the child's help in making into a bundle her best gown and ribands, preparatory to departure, my aunt and I were left alone.

As though unconscious of my moodiness, the dear soul chatted to me in her pleasant fashion, and ere-long grew confidential.

"Ay, Normand, I am glad you are come, even for this brief stay," she said. "It is some time since we have seen you, by reason I dare say of your being so taken up with your books. Henceforth I hope you will come to us oftener. Your uncle has found great good fortune upon the seas and along the southern coast of late; and, by no means the least of these fortunate happenings, in his opinion, was the meeting with yonder cavalier.

"What an odd chance that you should already know him; yet it is not over-strange either, since so dashing a man must have made an impression in Quebec, and then, of course, there was that fracas with Sabrevois, albeit the vain lieutenant is an experienced swordsman, and they should have been permitted to fight, I maintain.

"My faith, but your uncle esteems greatly this La Mothe. A man of brilliant parts, he says, is the young Seigneur de Cadillac; ambitious, yet noble-minded; fated to make a name for himself and those connected with him,—one born to achieve place and power. He holds commissions, both military and marine, from the King; a soldier of fortune now, to be sure, but, my dear, he looks to receive a rich grant of land in the vicinity of Acadia, in acknowledgment of his services to the government,—and, like the eagle, he is bound to soar high.

"Well, Normand, it pleases me that you have discovered how matters stand. You have seen and heard for yourself how he regards Thérèse, and have noted, if I mistake not, how the roses bloom in her cheeks if he but turns his eyes upon her?"

"Yes, and anon, I suppose, he will sail away with my uncle and leave her distraught and unhappy," I mumbled fiercely.

"Hein, not so!" corrected "la bonne mère," laughing at my spleen. "He is minded to wed her as soon as may be, and take her with him when he sails; while she, in truth, awaits the ringing of her marriage bells with much joy and content."

"But my father and mother?"

"They have to-day agreed to the marriage. The affair with Sabrevois troubled them much, especially as the latter was known to be a suitor for the hand of Thérèse. Had the accident been serious, the scandal of it would, I fear, have been fatal to Cadillac's hope of winning their consent to accept him as their son-in-law. But since the coxcomb has received only a broken head, that counts for nothing, and Thérèse will soon be a happy bride, God willing. Your parents demurred at the haste, indeed, but Cadillac's ardor, and the necessity that Guyon and he set sail again at an early date, have prevailed."

Here was news truly. So it was all arranged, and until now I had been told nothing of what was going on! Bitter enough I felt, as I sat looking down at my plate.

But presently, glancing up, I saw again beside the hearth Thérèse, whom I so dearly loved, — Thérèse, who stood motionless, her eyes fixed upon me with a half-deprecating, half-wistful expression of sisterly tenderness and regret at my chagrin. Thereat, unable to withstand their mute appeal, I rose, shook off my selfish moroseness, strode across the room, and, taking in mine her kind hands that had ever been as ready as was her heart to lend me help and comfort, I bent my head and kissed them, saying, —

"Thérèse, no man's devotion, however exalted, is great enough to be worthy of you. But if you have given your love to this chevalier of whom all speak

so well, if you will to wed him, then may you possess the homage of his life, and all good fortune and happiness."

At this she made as if to protest my praise of her sweet self.

"Foolish boy," she said caressingly, as for a moment she leaned her head against my breast. "I wished for an opportunity to tell you, Normand; and — and — you see for yourself no one could help liking him."

CHAPTER FOURTH

OUR SIEUR'S ACADIAN HOME

A FEW weeks later, on the 25th of June, 1687, Thérèse was married to Antoine de la Mothe Launay, Sieur de Cadillac. The ceremony was performed before the high altar of the cathedral, by the curé, Père Dupré, and the nuptials were long recalled as of the grandest of the time.

Old Quebec has seldom seen a fairer bride than was this sweet sister of mine. My father gave, in her honor and in compliment to her gallant bridegroom, a wedding banquet, which was attended by Governor Denonville, the noble Bishop Laval, the Intendant, and all the distinguished society of the town. After the feast there were toasts and pleasantries apparently without end; and among the guests, and foremost in the dance, was the whilom lover of Thérèse, — Sabrevois, in the blithest of humors, and more agreeable because less consequential than hitherto. In faith, I opine there is many a man who would thus be the better for a broken head.

Blue as were the skies, and prodigal the sunshine of that happy day and the week following, during which the festivities were kept up, both at our house in the town and at Beauport, yet ever drew nearer the hour when our dear girl was to set sail with her husband for his far-away home in Acadia.

My mother, to whom Thérèse was as a right hand, kept up bravely and tried to see the romance of her youth renewed in the marriage of her daughter; my father would have no word spoken of the coming parting. As for myself, although I danced with the maid of honor and every pretty demoiselle of the company, and bandied merry speeches with all, there were moments when the spectres of the adieux to be said spoiled all the mirth for me.

Not only would I miss Thérèse, the confidant of my boyish peccadillos and a most sage adviser, but, now that my momentary distrust of La Mothe was proved unjust, it seemed to me that with his going the star of my horizon would set, leaving me in darkness and discontent.

"There will be for me not even the resource of escaping from life's prosiness to the Recollet book-room with its scanty treasures," I muttered to myself one morning. "Since my father has made me his clerk, my days henceforth must be spent in the office of his great warehouse at the foot of the Sault au Matelot. Ah, if I could but sail away with my hero! Why, I will go with him," I cried with sudden resolve, and sought him out forthwith.

Cadillac stood on the deck of his ship at Beauport, watching his men as they stowed the cargo of various stores not procurable at Port Royal.

"Mon chevalier, take me with you," I called to him. "Never can I abide the dulness of this place when you are gone!"

At my impulsive words he wheeled about in his alert way, gave me a searching glance, and laying a hand upon my shoulder, said with his captivating smile, —

"Té, lad; dazzled by the glamour of an adven-

turous life, you wot nothing of its realities. The uncertainties, the perils through storms and the casualties of the seas; the rigors of a climate as inhospitable as a Canadian winter joined with the privations and dangers of a still wilder land; at times actual poverty, — even hunger and cold.”

“Surely I were a weakling not to be able to dare hardships wherefrom Thérèse, a mere girl, does not flinch,” I protested hotly.

He looked amused, and shook his head, as one not yet recovered from the half-awed surprise of a dawning revelation of a true woman’s heart; as I remembered long afterwards.

“Ah, Normand,” he said gently, “the love of a devoted wife braves with loyal steadfastness privations from which the strongest hero might well shrink. In sooth, I doubt if I did right to link the fate of your sweet sister with my own; whether indeed it might not have been better to have sailed away with my love unspoken, after all. However, the bond is made. For myself, I am richly content, and for her, — well, I will do my best to shield and make her happy. But you, — why should you cast away a tranquil existence, and the chance of acquiring honor and fortune in the King’s strong town of Quebec, for the whim of following the hazards of a daredevil soldier of fortune? Your uncle Guyon follows the sea; but he is not so rich, nor has he so enviable a social position as your father, who remains quietly at home, giving his time to business and the best interests of his family.”

“Mine is no whim,” I persisted with indignation.

“Hein, beaufrère, I question neither your endurance nor your valor,” laughed he. “I did but wish to warn you that the life you would fain take up is by

no means plain sailing, nor yet a matter of courting a fair demoiselle and winning a bride. It may perchance hold great prizes, but the interval between is one of discouragement and struggle."

"For that I care not," I broke out. "I am young and strong; and is it not the struggle that makes life worth the living?"

And as he turned and walked with me to the stern of the vessel, I went on, —

"Oh, if you but knew what fine castles in Spain I was wont to build when I was supposed to be at work in the peaceful book-room of the Recollets."

When I paused to take breath, my dear *Sieur* said with a nod of the head, —

"Well, well, a colt is good for nothing if it does not break its halter. Or rather, *Normand*, you are like a good sword of finely tempered steel that should not be left to rust in the scabbard. If you wish to go, come then. And should I attain the brilliant destiny the soothsayers predict and my ambition tells me I have power to achieve, you shall have a brother's share in my success."

Extravagantly happy, I clasped his hand. In my joy I could have fallen upon his neck with a grateful embrace, or upon bended knee sworn fealty to him as a landholder pays homage to his lord; but I felt intuitively that, whatever tribute he might require from other men, from me he liked better this simple hand clasp. He had named me brother, and by so doing had bound me to his interests forever.

Thus it came about that I sailed away with the dashing *Sieur de la Mothe* to his *Acadian* home, as his clerk, but with the promise of having part at times in his voyages and expeditions. And in being thus selected I was given a preference over

my cousin Robert de Reaume, who much desired to go.

But at my departure little Barbe wept nearly all the brightness of her pretty eyes away, nor would she be comforted, even when I promised to bring her, when I came home again, a chain of gold set with rubies, like to the one the handsome bridegroom had bestowed upon my sister as a wedding gift.

The occupation of privateering in which *Sieur Cadillac* and my uncle *Guyon* were engaged was esteemed in those days a lawful one. The French buccaneer considered himself in the King's employ, and, while his pay depended upon the fortune he met on the ocean, he received the protection of his own government. He was expected to take, pillage, or destroy as many good English or Spanish vessels as crossed his course ; but he was supposed to leave the sailing-craft of his countrymen alone, or give them assistance as to friends in distress. It is true, many of those engaged in this daring warfare on the high seas were pirates who hoisted the black flag and slew all who fell into their hands with barbarous cruelty ; but my uncle and *La Mothe* were by no means men of this stamp. They were well regarded by every one for their good service in his Majesty's foreign wars, and as a recognition of this service the *Sieur de Cadillac*, during the summer that followed his marriage, received from Governor *Denonville* and the *Intendant de Champigny* a grant of the Island of *Mont Désert*, and of *Donaquec*, a large tract of land on the coast of our province of *Maine*, which lies to the southeast of *Quebec* and between it and *Acadia*, as a glance at the chart will show.

In the spring we went down from *Port Royal* to the island for a few months, and the next year we

did so again; for, the King having confirmed the grant, Cadillac determined to use the dowry Thérèse had brought him to improve this seigneurie.

Already my brother-in-law was looked upon as a man of importance. Well too had he kept his promise to me that I should have a share in his adventures and exploits. I had sailed with him upon several voyages, visiting New England, and going southward, even to the shores of Virginia. The bays and rivers, as also the settlements of the Atlantic seaboard from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the Bay of Chesapeake, were as familiar to him as were the banks of the little river St. Charles and the streams about Beauport to me, in the days of my boyhood.

At Mont Désert we were kept from ennui by the menaces of one Andros, the English Governor who claimed the province. It was the same Andros who later demanded from the settlers of Connecticut the surrender of their charter, which forthwith disappeared as though plucked away by the hand of Liberty herself.

Years after, there came to me, as upon the wind, a rumor that this document had been concealed by some stanch rebel in the hollow of a tree. If so, all honor to him for the deed. As for our *Sieur*, he laughed to scorn the claims of the pompous Governor, and leaving Mont Désert to be defended by our Indian allies, returned with his household to Port Royal after the festival of the Harvest.

No sooner were we at home than there were begun preparations for the reception of some unknown visitor. The manor was hung with garlands; the orchards and our fertile farms were laid under generous contribution; fat beeves were killed. Thérèse brought out the finest of the store of table damask

that formed part of her bridal outfit, burnished the silver plate, and still further busied herself in directing the best cooks of the settlement, who had been pressed into service.

One evening with our Sieur I paced the gallery of the house. Around about it lay the golden fields, and beyond them rose the dark forests of pine and hemlock. Before us the waters of the harbor reflected the sunset clouds, and danced in white waves along the shore, — sporting white waves that somehow made me think of the pretty feet of little Barbe, as once, of a summer's day, I saw her tripping unshod upon the sands of Beauport. And ever after it seemed to me that shoes were all too heavy for her dainty grace, although my uncle was wont to bring her shapely footwear, upon his return from his voyages, — Spanish slippers and the like.

But to resume my story. Taking my arm with the courtly dignity natural to him, Cadillac said: "Normand, there are great doings at hand. I am shortly to entertain the Sieur Meneval."

I shrugged a shoulder, for the Governor of Acadia had more than once been hospitably welcomed at our house without this ado.

My brother gave a good-humored laugh over my incredulity.

"Hein! You have not heard all," he proceeded. "With the Sieur Meneval is to come a stranger of wide repute, an Admiral but lately out from France."

"Ah," I ejaculated, comprehending the gravity of the intelligence.

"My expected guest is the Sieur de la Caffinière," he pursued, sweeping the air with his right hand, as though it held a sabre and he was cleaving his way to glory. "He wishes me to sail away with him, no

matter where,—in the service of the King. My knowledge of the North Atlantic and the shores bordering thereon, is recognized by the ministers of his Majesty, and I am selected for an important task."

As I listened, my ardent young blood glowed in my veins and rushed to my face in a crimson flush, while my heart throbbed exultantly at the hope of having a part, even if a humble one, in this new cruise.

Reading my thoughts, La Mothe sighed.

"You would fain go with me, Normand," he said hesitatingly. "And so it may be, provided the *Sieur de la Caffinière* consents. There is a service as onerous, if less dashing, I thought to ask of you; but —"

"What is it you would have me do?" I stammered with emotion.

"My one anxiety is for my wife," returned Cadillac, moodily. "I am loath to leave *Thérèse* here alone, yet at present I have no way of sending her back to *Quebec*. My absence will be short, I trust; if I am delayed, *François Guyon* will be here in the spring, and she can return with him to visit her people. I might, indeed, at the expense of some degree of my state, send my wife and our infant child to stay with the *Lady de Meneval*, but in that event this household would be broken up."

Plainly enough I saw wherein lay my duty.

"Say no more, *mon chevalier*," I interrupted in a voice that trembled somewhat, half from the bitterness of the disappointment I strove to conceal, half through the earnestness of my new resolve. "I will remain here, since it is your wish."

He thanked me warmly and after a pause continued, —

"To you, Normand, jointly with Thérèse, I commit my lands, and whatever of bullion, specie, or jewels have come to me as spoils of Spanish galleons or English merchantmen, and are still in my possession. Above all, to your protection I confide the treasures beside which all else is dross, my precious Thérèse and my little daughter Madeleine."

"Am I not bound by the ties of nature to shield my sister and her child from all peril, even with my life?" I answered. "Be content, I now solemnly pledge myself so to do. With your Acadian men-servants, farm-laborers, and Indians, and myself to defend them, Thérèse and the little one will be as safe here as if under my father's roof in that secure town founded by the wise Champlain on the rocky promontory of the St. Lawrence."

My brother pressed my hand and said once more, as on the day I had prayed to follow his fortunes, —

"Normand, you are a good lad, and as brave as true. I thought you would respond as you have done, but when the spirit is troubled one craves a word of loyalty from a friend."

At this commendation my heart grew light again. Our Sieur had honored me with his confidence, and my youthful vanity was well pleased that my sister would look to me to manage for her the considerable estates of La Mothe.

As for the feast in honor of the Sieur de la Caffinière, it was prepared for naught. A storm arose, and when the skies cleared, a wind so swept the sea that when the Admiral's ship, the Embuscade, was sighted, the impossibility of his effecting a landing was soon apparent. Cadillac went out to him in a canoe which every moment seemed about to become the prey of the waves. But the Indians who guided it

were themselves like children of the deep and took a savage pleasure in the danger.

The ship sailed away, and after many weary weeks came a packet from our *Sieur* to Governor Meneval with an enclosure for Thérèse, these letters being brought by a privateer who was scouring the waters of our latitude on the watch for foreign craft.

The mysterious expedition had been the outcome of a brilliant plan to proceed to the Gulf of Manathe and capture New Amsterdam, the city recently taken from the Dutch a second time by the English, and re-named for the Duke of York. But the project failed, and the *Sieur de la Caffinière* set sail for the Old World, taking Cadillac with him.

"Keenly do I regret our prolonged separation, *mamie*," wrote De la Mothe to my sister. "But I must follow my star, that one day its radiance may shine upon you whom I so dearly love. Only to the bold man does Fortune hold out a helping hand, and luck comes but to those who go after it. Be of good cheer. Return to Quebec in the spring, if you so will, and there await my coming, which shall be before the end of the summer."

Thus it was that our *Sieur* went to the court of the Grand Monarque. Unhappily his resources became exhausted during this strange quest for employment. Whatever there was, we sent to him; but although he found favor with the great in France, he was soon forced to live upon borrowed money.

How often does success take roads that lead well-nigh to despair! Had Madame Cadillac returned to Quebec with my uncle Guyon when he came again to our province, she might have escaped grave danger. But Thérèse ever believed that a wife is her husband's best steward, and was unwilling to intrust

even to me the sole management of the fertile lands granted to her lord by the Crown.

One May morning, as I looked out to sea, I saw through my lenses a strange ship approaching the harbor. Presently another came into view, and then a third.

A few minutes later, a messenger upon a horse shod with fire tore down the road from the Governor's residence.

"The English," he shouted to the peasants as they rushed out of their houses, "the English! Arm yourselves and to the ramparts, every man of you!"

It was as when a whirlwind threatens our crops in midsummer, or a wave of the treacherous sea breaks through the dikes.

The Acadians sprang into their cabins, tore muskets, axes, pikes from the walls, and hurried to the fortifications. The women too, in their blue kirtles and with the strings of their Normandy caps flying wild, followed to the stockade with the ardor of warriors.

But I need not describe the defence of Port Royal against the assault of the freebooter Sir William Phipps. The story of the brave resistance which won for our small garrison honorable terms of surrender, is told in the annals of New France. Having fought my best, I now thought the time was come to keep my promise to our Sieur, for I distrusted the pledges of the English filibuster. Madame Cadillac would fain have remained to guard the interests of her husband, but I reminded her of my command to guard her safety and insisted that she take refuge in the woods.

Our party consisted of Thérèse and her child; a little girl cousin, Elizabeth Brunet, whom my sister

had brought from Montreal; Gaspard, the Abenakai youth that Cadillac had rescued just as a band of savages were about to burn him at the stake; two Indian guides, and myself.

In the forest we lived on into the summer, subsisting upon edible roots, upon rabbit's meat, and the fish of the pools and streams. Occasionally our Indians shot a deer, and often their arrows or my own fusee brought down wild birds, whereof over our camp-fire Thérèse made a ragout that was most tasty.

Madame Cadillac and the little girl Elizabeth endured the hardships of this rude life uncomplainingly, and the winsome baby chirped and twittered as gayly as any nestling in the trees above us, by her pretty ways beguiling her mother to merriment. Even I, who was wont to regard her with amused awe, like to a boy who sees in an aviary some pert bird of a rare species,—even I found her infant coquetries and smiling humors most diverting; while, when she lifted up her voice and wept, her baby wail disconcerted and alarmed me more than would the prospect of a foe lurking in the underbrush.

Ever we haunted the woods near the coast, and at last succeeded in signalling a French vessel. A boat came up to the beach for us, we were taken to the ship, and the gold I had brought purchased for us passage home.

But alack, during the voyage we were seized by a corsair. For the sake of Thérèse I availed of the opportunity offered to send to Quebec and beg my father to ransom us, which he did at great price. On my own account I would never have asked it; and indeed I felt that I cut a sorry figure when, after our many vicissitudes, we reached our parent's roof.

Later we learned how the doughty Sir Phipps, disregarding the terms of capitulation, gave Port Royal over to pillage; how our too credulous Governor Meneval was himself held a prisoner, plundered of clothes and moneys, and carried off on board the conqueror's frigate to view the further spoliation of his people.

The booty taken away from the province must have paid the cost of the expedition, and left besides a rich surplus to be divided among the soldiers, even though the commander kept the best of the spoils for himself. For the thrifty leader went so far that he actually plundered the kitchens and wardrobes, and Thérèse often speculated as to how Madame Phipps was pleased with certain laced gowns clasped with silver, which had once been my sister's pride.

As for our Sieur's home in fair Acadia, the house, spacious and imposing albeit built of pine logs, was, like the other principal buildings of the settlement, reduced to ashes. His fields were laid waste, his fine herds gone. Of all his estates there was left but a desolated tract of land; and doubtless, had we not remained so long in the forest, we should never have gotten away at all.

CHAPTER FIFTH

A MESSENGER TO COMTE FRONTENAC

PLEASANT it was to be at home again after our three years of absence. Of the many friends and relatives who greeted our return none gave me a gayer welcome than little Barbe, grown taller and still more winsome, and who now, forsooth, assumed toward me a half-perverse, half-coaxing humor, — a pretty coquetry whereat I laughed, it being amusing in the little maid.

Yet it tried my patience, too, and caused me to lend more thought to the pranks of the saucy minx than was merited by so frivolous a subject. What vexed me the more was that Robert de Reaume gave over-attention to her moods. I should have been better pleased to see him bantering pretty speeches with a demoiselle suited to him in age, rather than threatening to snatch a kiss from little Barbe at every opportunity. To be sure, she was ever so swift that he ne'er won the chance, but there was over-much parley about the matter, especially since, save for her greeting to me upon my home coming, she would never let me have a kiss either. This was truly absurd, for erstwhile, when I visited Beauport, she ever came with me to the house door, and insisted that I bend down and kiss her rosy mouth ere I rode away.

Such airs do young maids put on when they turn from their merry games and romps to glance into a

mirror and discover that they are agreeable to the eye. My faith, how they then do magnify their own importance!

Soon, however, I had scant leisure to remark upon the whims of a much-indulged child. The welcome to Thérèse and myself was scarce over, when the sensation created by our arrival was forgotten in the greater excitement of the news that I lamented it had not been our fortune to bring. One drowsy afternoon there was, all at once, a stir in the town. I had taken my hat and was about to go out to see what it meant, when my father came upstairs from his warehouse.

"Hein, Normand!" he said, "here is startling intelligence. It seems, while you were held by the corsair, an Indian has been making his way over-land from Acadia. His story is that the Abenakai have learned, from a pale-face woman captured near a village called Portsmouth, that a fleet has sailed from the south, under Sir William Phipps, to attack our city. Warning of the danger which threatens us has been cried in the Market Place, and a messenger has been despatched in all haste up the river to Montreal, where the Sieur Louis de Baude, Comte de Frontenac, but recently established himself at the head of his forces."

"This is weighty information, surely!" I cried, striding up and down the floor and rattling my sword in its sheath. "Still, our Royal Governor is more than a match for our white foes and the Five Nations combined. Keen is my impatience to see the great man again. During his former term of office I, as a boy, looked on him with reverence as the representative of the Sun King."

"Ay, ay, now above the murmurs of his oppo-

nents, you will hear the voices of the people hailing him as the man destined to restore to hope and courage the colony prostrated by the mistakes of his predecessors, — mistakes that have brought about this war with the southerners and the Iroquois," declared Denys Guyon, sententiously.

"But think you he will get back in time?" I queried. "Will he not be intercepted?"

"Never fear," answered my father.

Within the next few days the seigneurial families flocked from far and near to the town, seeking its greater security; and among them came the family of my uncle Guyon, to avail of the protection of my father's house during the expected siege.

François Guyon himself remained at Beauport in command of a body of armed peasantry who were ordered to watch the river below the village.

The seigneurs brought with them their *censitaires*. Early and late the streets resounded to the tread of armed men, some but rudely equipped with farm implements, which nevertheless had ere now proved in their hands formidable weapons.

The commissary was busy provisioning the place; tradespeople and housewives laid in supplies and, notwithstanding the anxiety dormant in every heart, the Market Place was a scene of gayety and thrift, of barter and gossip, of meetings of old acquaintance, of flirtations between the soldiers and the bright-eyed young maids of the humbler order, — for where is the woman, gentle or simple, whose fancy is not caught by the color of a military coat or the cockade of a soldier's chapeau?

One morning, soon after sunrise, I was aroused by a confusion outside my window, a cry that swept through the Lower Town like the current of the river

lashing against the Rock after a storm. Throwing open the casement, I saw that the thoroughfare was thronged with eager townspeople all hurrying to the Esplanade.

"What is it, — the enemy?" I shouted to a stout bourgeois who lagged behind his fellows.

"The enemy!" he echoed scornfully. "Do you think I would run myself into the risk of an apoplexy for an enemy, civilized or savage? No, it is Comte Frontenac coming home. His bateaux have been sighted on the river."

Forthwith I dressed, intending to fare forth also for the quay and with no thought of other comradeship than my trusty rapier; for what better society should be desired by a gallant who has seen both danger and adventure than the good sword that has served him well?

As I passed out, who should catch sight of me but saucy Barbe, who thereupon cried to me in her most coaxing tones, and her voice was as sweet as a bird's in spring, —

"Normand, Normand, take me with you!"

"Tée, Mignonne, it is no time for little maids to be abroad, when highways and squares are filled with rough folk," I answered with sternness. "You would be treated with scant courtesy, meet with rude speech, and mayhap even lose yourself amid the uncouth populace."

"How can I lose myself?" returned the mischief, pertly. "But if your prowess, my chevalier of the raven locks, is not equal to the test of protecting me from the unmeaning gruffness of our humble good folk of the town, or your arm so weak you cannot keep me from being batted about like a shuttlecock among the crowd, how can I believe the stories

Thérèse tells of your courage, or but laugh when I see you taking on the airs of a hero?"

Now, this was audacious of the baggage, for well she knew I am not one to boast, or take to myself credit for the intrepidity which others affirm I have ever displayed in time of sudden extremity or stress.

As the prick of a sword will stir the blood of a man so that he rushes madly into any encounter without stopping to question whether it be rash or no, so the sharpness of her woman's wit, even though it were but like to the sting of a honey-bee, — if the honey-bee stings, — pestered me out of my good judgment.

"Oh, welladay, Mam'selle Malapert, come if you will," I responded with some impatience. "You say aright, it were no very heroic position to constitute myself the squire of a giddy little lass into whose foolish brain has entered the wish to cast aside her puppets and follow the music of fife and drum. But if you persist, were the crowd a rabble of foreign soldiery or in sooth a band of Iroquois, 'twould pleasure me as well. I would fain show you that my claim to valor, poor as it may be, does not rest merely on the idle gossip of my good sister, though perchance, if what she says be not true, she would not be here awaiting the return of her husband, who thought well enough of my spirit to commit to my charge her protection and security during his enforced absence in France."

Of a surety, my mood was no encouragement to the child to burden me with her company. Yet, with a merry laugh, she gayly caught at my permission, bade me wait until she should get the pretty new bonnet that Aunt Guyon had bought for her on the

arrival of the recent ship from France, and, returning in a trice, flitted before me into the street.

Once out of doors, however, her mood changed, and she walked beside me with a maidenly sedateness that took me by surprise and yet pleased me well, for I saw how in annoying exigency a young maid's natural dignity and innocence might be to her an armor and defence against rude speech and usage. Thus the unwonted gravity of little Barbe interested me by its strangeness even more than her roguish pranks had teased me, — since all the while, as we pursued our way, she chattered as blithely as a bird sings.

After all, I was glad I had humored the child; it was very pleasant to have her tripping beside me thus, and altogether I was more content than I had been since the day of my home-coming.

With the throng, we made our way to the promenade on the river bank planted with trees, where in those days the King's ships landed. The fleet of canoes bearing the viceroy and his company of soldiers had been sighted afar off upon the broad waters of the St. Lawrence, and now the troops from the fort, followed by the populace, came down to welcome the one man who had the power and resource to render their defeat impossible.

It was a fine sight indeed, — the long row of glittering bayonets filing down from the Upper Town; the brave Gascon soldiers in their blue and white uniforms, tall caps, and long queues; the gorgeous officers, the gleaming halberds in the hands of the sergeants. The street rang with the notes of tambour and flageolet, and as the marching men broke into a grand chorus, singing with spirit the martial song which rehearses the glories of our great King, Louis

the Fourteenth, I experienced a thrill of enthusiasm, and little Barbe's heart beat faster, I venture to say, as she clapped her hands, and her cheeks grew the color of a wild rose.

Now the chief canoe reached the shore, and the Governor landed. We could not see him, because of the throng, but from the shouts and cheers, and the waving of caps, we knew that he had stepped ashore, and presently discovered that he willed to go at once to inspect the fortifications, albeit great was his need of rest and refreshment after his long voyage.

For, having been met by a canoe from Quebec bringing the message that the English had verily been seen above Tadoussac, he had sent back word to Callières, Governor of Montreal, to come down to our aid with all the forces at command, and then urged his Indian boatmen onward through the pelting autumnal rain-storm which had continued for three days.

Now, however, it was a glorious morning. Forever in my memory is stored the picture of the fine old man as on foot he climbed the steep ascent of Mountain Street. If I but close my bodily eyes, I see again with the eyes of my spirit the brave and fiery soldier whom the citizens greeted with joy as the deliverer who would help them in this hour of trial, and to whom they cried out, doffing their caps, —

"The King can have all we possess and ourselves too, Monsieur de Frontenac, if you will save us from the Bostonnais."¹

To these acclamations Monsieur le Comte in-

¹ So the French termed all their English neighbors of the southern provinces.

clined his head with a gracious air that would have become royalty itself.

Often afterwards, recalling that day, I have not wondered at the ardor which the usually stolid Indians themselves showed upon another occasion when, the Governor having gone to make them a visit of friendship, they lifted him in his canoe upon their shoulders and bore him in triumph, singing and crying out, through the forest and along the margin of the rapids.

The imposing array of troops was no novel sight to Barbe. Many a time she had watched the morning drill in the Place d'Armes. With the appearance of his Excellency she was familiar too, having seen him, Sunday after Sunday, take his place with state in the elevated royal banc, or pew, in the chancel of the cathedral; or gazed after him as, escorted by his body-guard, he passed through the streets on his way from the Castle of St. Louis to the meetings of the Council, at the Palace of the Intendant.

Nevertheless, she now grasped my arm as he approached, and her bright glance fastened upon his face with an expression of enthusiastic confidence not unmingled with awe, as though her child heart said that, since he had come, she would be no longer afraid, even were the Bostonnais in the very act of storming the cliff. So intent was her gaze that it drew to itself the glance of Frontenac, despite the many eyes fastened upon him; and doubtless the flushed face of the innocent little maid appealed to his native chivalry, for he bent upon her a kindly look as he passed, and for an instant a smile singularly gentle and winning flitted across his stern, care-lined visage.

Barbe and I returned to the house in high feather,

but after that for many days I took slight notice of her, being occupied, as was every man who could carry a musket or wield a sword, with the grave matters of the hour.

In the small hours of the sixteenth of October the alarm went through the city that the lights of strange ships had been descried on the river. When day dawned it showed the fleet of the English passing the Point of Orleans, and as they came nearer, we who watched them from the citadel saw that they were well manned with troops.

As I contemplated these ships, I fell to musing, my mind busy with recollections of Acadia.

"My faith, man," suddenly exclaimed a voice at my elbow, "what are you standing here for, raging to yourself and fretting your sword in its scabbard as though you would fight the enemy single-handed?"

I turned and saw beside me my friend Robert de Reaume, who like myself had been stationed at one of the batteries during the night. Although the foreign fleet lay in the stream, her commander showed no immediate purpose to commence hostilities.

"By the sword of St. Michael, the doughty Ship's Carpenter designs to overhaul his craft for repairs before action,—a great folly, since they will be more in need of patching up after they have drawn the fire of our guns," exclaimed De Reaume scornfully, in allusion to the humble origin of the Admiral. "Grace to you, good sir, since you would give us a chance to dine once more on St. Lawrence eels, ere you steal our table service, our spoons and forks and cups, our vesture, and even our peruques. Can it be that we shall be left for another space 'twixt

sunrise and sunset secure in the possession of our nightcaps?"

Thus did my companion, despite the gravity of the situation, make sport of Sir Phipps' confiscation of the domestic goods and chattels of poor Governor Meneval.

But I was not in a jesting humor, and turned away my face toward the interior of the fort, while he remained scanning the river.

"Ah," he cried presently, "what is that?"

Wheeling about, I looked again toward the English vessels in time to see a small boat leaving the Admiral's ship. At its stern fluttered a white flag.

"A flag of truce," muttered Robert, perplexed. "What can be the meaning of this?"

As we looked, four canoes put out from the Lower Town and met the enemy's boat midway. Then we saw a man taken from the boat into one of the canoes, which was immediately paddled back to the shore.

Having been relieved at our posts, we were free to go where we would for a breathing-space. Accordingly we hurried from the ramparts as though shod with the shoes of St. Christopher. When, making our way among the vociferating populace, we reached the Esplanade, the canoe was already come up to the landing. The Town Marshal had passed us, escorted by a squad of soldiers. Anon we beheld the same party returning, their number augmented by the presence of a stranger.

Between two sergeants walked an English officer with firm step and haughty mien. His eyes were covered by a thick bandage which hung down over his face. It was impossible, therefore, to distinguish his features, but I judged from his slight, well-knit

figure that he was young. Also I knew from his confident bearing that he was brave, and a true man must needs pay the tribute of his admiration to bravery, even in an enemy.

He was, obviously, the bearer of a message to the governor; and, in pursuance of a clever ruse, the troops began to lead him to the Castle by a circuitous route, that he might hear the sounds of warlike preparations, and note the number of obstructions and barriers of *chevaux de frise* to be passed in the ascent to the Upper Town.

As we followed on, Robert and I fell to laughing at the deceptions practised to induce the Southron to believe he was surrounded by a numerous garrison. A half-score of men met him now and again, crossing and recrossing his path, as though bands of troops were continually passing along the way. With secret delight his conductors made him clamber in the dark over the same barricade many times. He was jostled and hustled by the noisy mob; and finally, the marketwomen and the merry maids, ay, and more than one *grande demoiselle* and dame of Quebec who chanced to be caught in the rout, applauded these buffooneries and cried out in gay, though scornful badinage, "Colin Maillard," "Colin Maillard," as if it were a game of blind-man's buff and the officer a poor fool to make merry over.

In the street, and borne onward by the crowd, I saw my sister Thérèse and little Barbe under the care of my father, Denys Guyon. Upon the countenance of Madame Cadillac was an expression of cold disdain; she did not condescend to smile at the ludicrous position of the unfortunate officer, while, to my surprise, Babette, whose wont it was to be

so easily moved by drollery, appeared now quite grave.

Did the English blood that gave to her fair cheek the flush of the wild rose cause her to sympathize with the Bostonnais, or was it only that she pitied his plight?

It must be the latter, I quickly concluded, for little Barbe was true as steel, and I could not believe that her heart, like a captive sea-gull winging away at the first chance of returning to its native element, had taken refuge with the southern ships.

After this glimpse of Barbe's serious face and of Thérèse in her silent dignity, I laughed no more at the stranger, however, but continued on with Reaume to see the end of the affair.

I think the officer perceived to some extent the trick played upon him, but the ruse succeeded in that it led him to suppose the town well defended.

Eh, bien! he was thus conducted over the three barricades of Mountain Street and onward, to the Place d'Armes. The broad square was now occupied by troops whose flashing bayonets gave back the rays of the sun, and at the sally-port of the Castle the sentries paced to and fro.

Never to me had the old Château of St. Louis, founded by the great Champlain, appeared so majestic as now with the morning light shining upon its gray walls and bastions.

As the soldiers led the messenger through the archway above which gleams the golden shield of the fleur-de-lis, we pressed forward also, and by virtue of our commissions were permitted to pass the guard and gained admittance to the assembly hall.

In those days the spacious audience chamber was

not so magnificently appointed as now, but presented a curious contrast of splendor and rudeness, its adornment suggesting nearness to the forest as well as the refinements of civilized life.

Among the rich tapestries that screened the oaken wainscoting of the room were to be seen, now and again, a brown buffalo skin, or the pelt of a fox or beaver; above the wide doorway hung the strong flat antlers of a moose; over a rich painting here and there were disposed, like garlands, parti-colored strings of wampum; while amid the swords, muskets, and halberds that ornamented the walls, appeared an Iroquois tomahawk and flint-tipped Indian arrows.

But on this occasion I gave not a second thought to the furnishings of the salon, for we found ourselves among a most distinguished company. Here were gathered representatives of the wealthy and prominent citizens, the civic authorities; French and Canadian officers, some of them of the famous regiment of Carignan-Sallières, Maricourt, Sainte-Hélène, Villebon, Valrenne, Iberville, made gorgeous pictures in their gold-laced uniforms, peruques and powder, plumed chapeaux and crimson sashes.

Upon the elevated platform at one end of the chamber sat the most important personages of New France,—Champigny, the Intendant; Monseigneur de Laval, who three years before had resigned from the active labors of the bishopric; and Monsieur de Frontenac, who occupied the throne-like, sculptured chair of state in the centre and a step higher than the others.

In so illustrious a throng I was soon crowded to the wall; but I was content, since my obscure position was an excellent coign of vantage, whence I could observe all that might take place.

The sergeants with their charge had already halted at the foot of the dais. With an imperious wave of the hand Comte Frontenac now directed them to remove the bandage wherewith the envoy was blindfolded.

They obeyed. As the sunlight pouring into the chamber struck the long-darkened eyes of the Englishman, its beams, flashing from the burnished weapons on the wall, the brilliant uniforms and jewelled sword-hilts of the officers, seemed to blind him anew.

Involuntarily he recoiled a pace or two, drew his hand across his brow, and then stared in wonder around the august assembly, before which he was evidently greatly surprised to find himself.

He was a handsome man, scarce more than a lad, straight, and strong, and soldierly in his bearing; and the thought passed through my mind that verily an antagonist such as he was worthy of my steel.

Quickly recovering his self-possession, the young Bostonnais bowed to the Governor and said deferentially, yet with something of brusqueness, —

“Your Excellency, I would that the duty assigned me were of a more agreeable nature. I am the bearer of a letter from Sir William Phipps, Knight-General, and Commander in the New World by Land and Sea of the Forces of their Majesties, William and Mary of England, to Comte Frontenac, Representative of the King of France in Canada.”

Thereupon he handed a document to Monsieur le Comte, who passed it over to an interpreter, and the latter read it aloud in French.

How my blood boiled as I listened! The missive was nothing less than a demand from the freebooter Admiral that we surrender to him our citadel, with our

fortifications and castle undemolished, and the King's and other stores unembezzled; also, that we give up all captives, and render over to him ourselves and our estates. Further, it set forth that upon our refusal thus to do, he would compel us to subjection by force of arms. "And to this summons," the arrogant communication continued, "an answer must be returned by our own trumpet, with safe conduct to the messenger, upon the peril that would otherwise ensue."

When the reading of this letter was finished, the officer coolly pulled out his watch and held it up for the gaze of the Governor.

"I care not to see the time," said Comte Frontenac with his grand manner, before which there was but one in the Colony who had not on occasion quailed, — the venerable bishop, in whom the unconquerable spirit of the ancient house of Laval-Montmorenci still lived.

"Then I beg to inform your Excellency that it is ten of the clock," replied the Englishman quietly, "and I must have the answer to this communication of my chief by eleven."

When the import of his words was explained by the interpreter, a loud chorus of angry exclamations rang through the chamber, re-echoing among the dark rafters of the roof, while every man present half drew his sword.

"Pardieu!" called out Valrenne, when the hubbub grew fainter for the moment. "Who is this Sir Phipps who makes so ludicrous a demand of us? A lawless corsair. Out upon the knave who has had the hardihood to offer this astounding proposition to the Council of Quebec and to our illustrious Lord Governor! He who brought the insult, too, ought to pay for his audacity with his life."

For a moment grave was the danger of the envoy, but any emotion he experienced at the jeopardy wherein he stood was imperceptible to the foes about him.

How the dark faces of the officers glowered upon the unfortunate man! The black eyes of the Intendant flashed vindictively, and as for the lion-hearted Frontenac, one could see by his lowering visage that his rage was fierce indeed.

Controlling himself to a remarkable degree, however, and ignoring the impetuous outburst of Valrenne, the Governor responded with imperious promptness, with which was yet mingled the fine courtesy that distinguished him as one accustomed to the usages of the most polite court of Europe.

"Sir, you ask an answer in an hour. I will not trouble you to wait so long. Here is my reply: I have knowledge of no such sovereign as William of England; but since my august master, Louis the Fourteenth, has accorded hospitality, aid, and protection to James Stewart, the legitimate sovereign of Sir William Phipps, your Admiral need not be surprised that I regard him but as a rebel against that prince, and his letter as beneath my notice.

"Moreover," continued Frontenac with a smile, as he turned to the officers gathered about him, "even had your chief offered me more advantageous terms, and I were of a temper to consider them, does he imagine that these gentlemen would agree to his conditions?"

During this straightforward speech of his Excellency the young officer lost scarce a whit of his air of nonchalance.

Yet "it is better to be the hammer than the anvil," and, courageous as he was, no doubt he felt loath to

face the fury of the choleric Sir Phipps by the delivery of so haughty a message.

"Will your Excellency have the answer set down in writing, that I may carry it to my chief in due form?" he asked, as he saluted once more with cool formality.

"No," returned Frontenac, decisively: "I will answer your General only by the mouth of my cannon, and thus will I teach him that a man such as I am is not to be summoned after this fashion. Let him do his best and I will do mine."

So saying, he rose abruptly, — a signal for the dismissal of the assembly.

The Englishman was forthwith blindfolded again, led over the barricades once more, and sent back in his boat to the ship.

After this there was an ominous quiet for some hours, during which, as we learned afterwards, Sir Phipps held a council of war and planned an attack upon Beauport, this intelligence being given to us by the Sieur de Granville, whom they had as a prisoner upon the flagship.

Our resourceful Governor, on his part, employed this time of calm that preceded the swiftly approaching storm, in completing all preparations and strengthening our defences

CHAPTER SIXTH

THE BUCCANEER'S SIEGE

NOR did Quebec trust alone to her strong position, the courage of her soldiery, the hardihood of her people.

"Let us invoke the God of armies," cried the venerable De Laval, as he stood in the pulpit of the cathedral with uplifted hands and eyes, while the crowd of citizens, noble and humble, and the habitants who had sought protection within the city sank to their knees on the pavement, the women weeping in foreboding of the horrors of the coming siege, the burghers and habitants renewing their resolution of resistance.

"Let us pledge ourselves," he continued, with the patriotism of his race, "vowing that if God will assist us to drive away the enemy at our gates, we will render to Him our thanks and the honor thereof forever."

"Amen," responded the Comte de Frontenac, from his elevated chair in the chancel, and his rich voice resounded through the nave like a grand note from an organ.

"Amen," echoed the Intendant, from the other side of the nave.

"Amen," repeated the kneeling congregation in fervid, impassioned acclamation.

"Amen," I cried with those around me, drawing my sword and flashing it aloft, as did every officer

present, while the women clasped their hands or beat their breasts, and a chorus of petition rose and swelled through the vast edifice like a wave of the sea or a long, deep roll of thunder.

The vow was duly registered, and the ceremony concluded with the usual benediction.

As the people streamed out of church, some excited and ardent, others grave and earnest, among a little knot of women worshippers, dames and demoiselles of quality, I caught a glimpse of my sister Thérèse, again with little Barbe under her wing.

Making my way through the crowd, I joined them as they came down the steps into the Market Place.

Although Madame Cadillac appeared pale, she was outwardly as calm as though she were setting forth to attend a social function at the Château, rather than going home to await in our care-shadowed house the trials that the day might bring.

"Ah, Thérèse, you are the worthy wife of a soldier," I cried, impressed by her composure, now that the danger was really upon us.

"I hope so, Normand," she answered with the brave, sweet smile that had so often cheered me amid our perils in Acadia. "Yet, alas, a woman's heart is ever torn by conflicting emotions of love and fear. One moment I grieve, and the next I am selfishly glad that my husband is not here, but speeding hither on the King's ship now due from France. What think you, Normand, will this frigate from the old country be cut off from us by these southern marauders, who know, I doubt not, that it is on its way? Will there be a fight? Cadillac would ask no better fortune; but, Normand, shall I ever see him again? He was the lover of my

girlish dreams, and he will ever be the hero of my heart's devotion."

"Yes, you are the worthy wife of a soldier, my sister," I repeated, knowing that such words would best sustain her courage. "And you will find small leisure even to fear, presently. But hope and pray as you will, for the prayers of a good wife are a soldier's best armor."

"Wherefore then have you not provided yourself with such a coat of mail, the burden whereof would rest less upon your own shoulders than upon the heart of another, Cousin Normand?" chimed in little Barbe, with roguish naïveté.

"Chut, Mam'selle Malapert, because the demoiselles nowadays are more pleased with the strains of a violin than fond of household tasks, less prone to the tambour frame than to the beribanding of their hair and the adornment of their vanity," I answered, half in impatience, half in raillery.

"Phouff," returned the saucy maid, with a gay toss of the head. "Do you want better bread than wheaten? You cannot judge by the label on the bag;" but thereon, as she saw me frown, her mobile face took on a sudden gravity and she added sweetly: "As you have no wife to pray for you, cousin, and since I put up a petition for you to-day before the altar of Notre Dame, well, 'a web begun is half done,' so I must perforce go on with the work and weave you a fine suit of chain armor for your safeguard during the siege."

"Do so, pretty one," I said; and, retaining the little hand she had involuntarily slipped into mine, I raised it to my lips with a thrill of emotion, I must confess, albeit 'twas the tenderness with which one caresses the pink-tipped fingers of a child.

"And what think you of *my* courage?" she demanded teasingly, while Madame Cadillac walked beside us with an absent air, absorbed in her own thoughts.

"Oh, you will be the wife of a soldier too, some day; but, no, I would rather see you a veiled nun, behind the grille of the Ursulines," I concluded brusquely, as the recollection of De Reaume's foolish encouragement of her natural coquetry obtruded itself upon me.

"Ho, ho! Belike it will not be for you to have aught to say in the matter," she retorted, snatching away her hand, and flushing the color of a peach-blossom. "I have heard of worse fates than the peaceful life of the cloister, and have often fancied that mayhap I should like to pass my life there."

While the little maid ran on thus, we reached the door of my father's house, and at the threshold I took leave for the nonce of my sister and her young charge, happy that Thérèse showed such good nerve, and winsome Barbe so bold a spirit, yet reflecting that the poor child was unappalled by the impending dangers and sufferings, simply because her gentle mind could form no conception of the miseries of a siege or the carnage of war. And I grew sick at heart as I thought of the enlightenment that must come to her when the guns should begin their terrible play.

Having seen madame and the dainty demoiselle safely within doors, I returned to the ramparts. Despite the valor of the garrison and people and the imperious stout-heartedness of the Governor, the very atmosphere that hung over the city seemed laden with a grave anxiety, for the fate of New

France depended on the issue of this conflict of the next few days.

Moreover, the best cause needs help, and as yet we had no news of the expected troops from Montreal. Thus amid clouds of apprehension the afternoon drew to a close.

At sunset, like the welcome breeze that springs up of a summer's evening, came word from the look-out at the highest point of the citadel that a dark moving mass, as a shadow on the landscape, was to be seen approaching across the country from the west.

An hour later the shadow resolved itself into a body of marching men. Then dusk fell, shutting them out from view.

About eight of the clock a great shout arose from the western gate, and a roll of drums with the music of fifes proclaimed through the town that our friends from Ville Marie had come to our assistance, having eluded the besiegers under cover of the darkness.

Never shall I forget the joy of their entrance into the city, — how our soldiers shouted and threw their caps into the air, yet the breach of discipline passed unreprieved; how the burghers flocked into the thoroughfares and yelled themselves hoarse with enthusiasm; and the women stood at the doors waving kerchiefs, ran out of the houses to greet the newcomers with blessings, or fell on their knees in the streets, thanking Providence for the aid sent to Quebec.

How all hailed Callières, the gallant Governor of Montreal, as he passed at the head of his eight hundred men! These were followed by a large company of *coureurs de bois*, *voyageurs*, young sons from the seigneuries along the river, with their *cen-sitaires*. In truth, a goodly band, they came march-

ing down the street of St. Louis, singing, at the full strength of their lungs, "La Clair Fontaine," and cheering in glad triumph.

I need not repeat in detail the story of the next three days, during which Sir Phipps, after several attempts, effected a landing at Beauport; yet I was in the fight under Sainte-Hélène, when the invaders were driven back.

On the third day, while we were still engaged at the outposts, the air was rent as by a thunderbolt, followed by a dull roar of reverberation from the rocky heights of Cape Diamond, La Tourmente, and the Cap Rouge, and a fainter echo from the distant hills. Sir Phipps being on the point of opening fire upon Quebec, our indomitable Comte Frontenac had begun the battle with this ringing shot of defiance.

Enraged, the Admiral answered with every gun he possessed, while the fortress gave him round for round; 't was like to volleys of musketry.

When our company returned at night from Beauport, the firing had ceased, but the next morning the Governor sent the besiegers a hot shot by way of breakfast and the cannonading recommenced.

I was sent to a battery of the Lower Town, commanded by Marincourt, who worked with a boyish glee as if at target practice, and by his cheery and dauntless spirit made us forget the withering fire directed against our position.

"It is well to aim well," he said, taking as a mark the flag-staff of the Admiral's ship. Swift and sure the ball sped, for presently we saw the staff snap in twain, and the ensign of St. George fell into the river and was borne away by the current.

"Who will capture it?" cried Marincourt, chafing

that he could not go himself, being unable to leave his post.

But there were not wanting volunteers for so dashing an adventure.

"By your leave, *Sieur Capitaine*, I will take with me two others and go out and get it," pleaded the stalwart soldier Jean Joly, eager for the perilous office.

"Eh bien, go!" tersely returned Marincourt, addressing himself again to the firing.

Choosing his men, Jean thereupon put out in a canoe and was paddled into the mid-stream. The English saw and shot at the little craft, but it escaped and reached the flag lying on the water.

Then Jean Joly, dit *Jolicœur*, bending over from the canoe, caught up from the tide the red banner, and the little bark darted for the shore, which it reached in safety with the glorious prize thus plucked from beneath the very beard of the enemy.

It is this banner that was hung up as a votive offering in the church of *Notre Dame des Victoires* built in commemoration of the preservation of *Quebec* in the Market Place of the Lower Town.

At last, one of the ships being disabled and another a wreck, Sir Phipps withdrew all his vessels out of range.

I had not been at home for three days. Now, being relieved from duty for a space, I bent my steps toward my father's house, not knowing but that a tragic tale might meet me at the threshold or that the fire of the besiegers might have razed the old home and sent into eternity the loved ones gathered about its hearthstone. Thank God, I found it intact and the dwellers therein unharmed, although nearly prostrated by the strain. For notwithstanding that

womenkind can be brave in emergency, can sustain the courage of a man, or impulsively rush into danger to protect a child or rescue one they love, it is small wonder that so fiery an ordeal as the late action should have played havoc with the nerves of the ladies of my family, so that at their weeping and then jesting the next moment I was much perplexed.

My mother clung to me as if she would never let me go again, but little Barbe demanded pertly how it was that I had not been wounded.

"'T would pleasure you, mam'selle, and accord with your romancing without a doubt, had I been brought home like a Spartan soldier on his shield," I answered curtly. "But soldiers have thrown away their shields long since. And as for my having escaped unscathed, was it not you who buckled on my armor, so to speak? Were your prayers so idle that you felt they would avail me nothing?"

At this her temper changed, like the teasing bit of April weather that it was, and laying a light clasp on my arm, she said, her eyes filling with tears that yet sparkled as diamonds in the sunshine of her smile:

"Ay, I did pray for you, cousin, many times in words, and ever in my heart during these last days, and — Why, you *are* wounded; see the blood upon your hand!"

At these words the silly maid went pale, and trembled so that if I had not caught her she would have fallen.

"Tut, tut!" I cried, breaking into a laugh. "'T is nothing! A scratch I got at the gun in some way; I had not noticed it before."

But, despite my protest, she must needs bind it up, which I finally suffered her to do, in punishment of

her former hard-heartedness, the while I inquired how she had stood her baptism of fire.

"In truth, Normand, when the guns began to roar, I hid away in a corner of the house, half dead with fright," she acknowledged, after beating about the bush, and making as though she had been used to sieges all her life. "It was like a great storm of thunder and lightning, when no place is secure against the death-dealing bolts from the sky. Oh, it is a wonder my hair did not turn white! Truly, cousin, do you not see some silver threads here?"

And catching at a long lock of her light hair, she held it up before me with a pretty coquetry, whereat I wound the soft curl around a finger of my unbound hand, and then, bethinking me that this was foolishness, shook it quickly off again.

"Ta-ta! For all her fears, little Barbe acquitted herself well," maintained my aunt Guyon, stoutly. "And after the first hour or two, she lent her aid in the household tasks, like the rest of us, even though to-day, when the firing was heaviest, some twenty balls fell into the garden, and two at least struck the house. But, happily, their force was spent and they did no damage save to shatter pieces of the rock. When the bombardment ceased for a spell, we gathered up the balls and sent them to the gunners nearest to us, who duly returned them to their owners through the cannon's mouth,—as our clever Governor Frontenac said to the envoy—ha, ha, ha!"

"Ah, Normand, we can make merry now," continued Barbe, a pitiful look crossing her sweet face. "Yet it was a sorrowful sight to behold the people abandoning the Lower Town, as we too must have done were not this dwelling built of stone. Many of our neighbors took refuge within the Seminary, others at

the Hôtel Dieu. The cellars of the Ursuline Convent are filled with women and children who there sought shelter; the wood-pile is being used for camp-fires, the beans and cabbages from the convent garden have all been taken to feed the soldiers. To-day one of the nuns had a corner of her apron shot away as she passed through the school-room. Still, notwithstanding this state of things, the good nuns have worked without ceasing for the comfort of those who fled to them and those to whom they could send aid. Monseigneur de Laval, and Monseigneur de St. Vallier, the new bishop, have been tireless, going about helping the people and encouraging them by their own fearlessness."

After a dinner at home, the first good meal I had had for some days, and having taken a short sleep, I returned to the battery whereat I was stationed.

Next day, our forces, under Frontenac himself, attacked the invaders, who with great bravery had again effected a landing at Beauport. The victory was ours; but alas, 't was dearly bought, for in the skirmish we lost the peerless Sainte-Hélène, the most gallant officer of the famous regiment of Carignan-Sallières.

Once more were the besiegers driven back to their ships. They had suffered from the unusual cold of the season, from the storm of wind and rain; and some of the troops were sickening with the small-pox, as we heard later.

Despite the success of our sally, Canada remained with her fate in the balance for several days longer.

But the elements were with us, the storm continued; then, one morning, the clouds rolled away, the golden October sunlight shone upon the swift waters of the St. Lawrence, and glinted the towers

and belfries of Quebec; and Sir Phipps, with this dazzling picture before him of the good town which had so sturdily resisted his assault, weighed anchor, and disappeared with his fleet behind the Isle of Orleans.

At this spectacle our people — citizens, noblesse, habitans, and soldiery — were wild with joy, and a great *Te Deum* was sung because of our deliverance.

CHAPTER SEVENTH

OUR ENGLISH DEMOISELLE

BECAUSE I possessed some knowledge of the woods, I was made one of a reconnoitring party sent out to keep watch of the southern frigates. When we came upon them, some four leagues down the river, how merry our young men made as they sighted the doughty Admiral on a scaffold at the side of his ship, plying his old trade of ship's carpenter in repairing the damage our guns had effected. There seemed to me, however, something of folly in these jests; but in New France an officer would rather die than work with his hands, lest he lose dignity or consideration thereby.

On our return from this expedition we learned that Sir Phipps had sent another message, and of a different stamp, to Comte Frontenac, and on that very day all the English in Quebec were to be exchanged for a band of French prisoners taken in former campaigns.

I went at once, therefore, and made my adieux to Mr. Davis, a brave Bostonnais who, having been given his parole at the beginning of his captivity, had lived at the Château as the guest of the Governor, and was regarded by all as a "bon homme." When at length I reached our house, little Barbe had much to tell me.

"Welcome, Normand!" she cried blithely, and for a wonder did not beat me off when I essayed to

touch with my lips her smooth cheek, now no longer pale as when I had seen her during the siege, but glowing with its wonted color. When, however, I would have stolen a kiss from her rosy mouth as well, she pushed me away, saying with a grand air that was truly laughable, "Have a care, sir," and drew herself up to her full height, whereat she did look taller by a good inch.

But her childish anger was short-lived, since if she kept up the quarrel with me she must forego the retailing of her news.

"A truce to this nonsense, cousin," she resumed presently. "I am between two minds, not knowing whether to be glad or sad. At the Ursulines I have grown to love well the two young Bostonnaise, the Demoiselles Clarke whom our Governor Frontenac ransomed from the Indians after the battle of Casco Bay, their father, a lieutenant, having then met his end. Much have these sweet demoiselles told me of the horrors of their captivity among the savages, and never did they tire of extolling the kindness of his Excellency in having freed and placed them at the convent. But now they are to be exchanged for French soldiers, and, although I rejoice for the sake of our poor fellows, I shall miss my friends most grievously. Then, too, there is the little Sarah Gerish, whom Madame de Champigny bought from the red men and sent to live at the Hôtel Dieu, — a pretty maid, frolicsome as a kitten. So fond is she of the hospital sisters, that when told she must needs leave them and sail away in the ship of the English Admiral, she vowed with a torrent of tears that she would not go. They are indeed loath to part with her, but it is right that she should be sent back to her own people."

Thus our winsome Barbe rattled on with naïve ardor.

While she spoke, I was conscious of a strange thrill at my heart, and then there swept over me a chill, like to that which comes upon a man shot down in battle or one who in a duel succumbs to a dangerous thrust of his antagonist's sword.

For in a trice there came to me the recollection of that whereof we had taken no heed during the siege, and which indeed had passed out of our thoughts as if it had never been, — the remembrance of the day whereon I, a prankish boy, had first beheld pretty Barbe, a tiny child of scarce two springtimes, — pretty Barbe, a soft, warm, smiling little creature, her chubby face pink-tinted like the sweet arbutus or May blossom of our Canadian woods; her fair curls tossed and tangled; her dimpled hands outstretched to my aunt Guyon from the detaining arms of the dark-visaged Indian chief who had brought the white baby captive from afar through the woods to Beauport, to barter her for a draught of French brandy.

Had the infant prisoner been a boy, doubtless it would have been reared to savagery and would perchance have become sachem of a tribe destined to war with relentless cruelty against his pale-faced brothers.

But a squaw pappoose — of what avail to rescue it from having its brains beaten out against a tree, save to buy with the frisky squirrel-like being a cup of the maddening fire-water of the *coureurs de bois*?

Yes, I had chanced to be there in the living-room of my uncle's house at Beauport when the strange bargain was made, and my aunt sent two Panis, servant men, to conduct the Indian beyond the settle-

ment ere they delivered to him the flagon of liquor, upon the pretence that were he to drink among the dwellings of the pale-faces, he would become less brave in battle. I remembered that when the savage set down the child upon the hearthstone, she clung to the skirts of my aunt, and how, when the redskin was gone and la mère Guyon took upon her knees the fairy wight that, like a snowflake borne upon the wind, had been brought to her threshold, the little waif nestled with winning confidence against her heart; and they loved each other as mother and daughter from that hour.

I remembered too how, rough lad though I was, I knelt beside my aunt and stroked the child's sunny hair with awkward gentleness, marvelling at its softness, and at the whiteness of her skin, and the beauty of her eyes that were like two purple violets.

And I recall the scene when my uncle Guyon came in from his ship at the wharf and found the fairy still enthroned upon Dame Guyon's knees, at the head of the bounteous board about which were gathered his own numerous family; when, having heard the tale, he clapped his thigh and declared his good wife had done well to keep the child, and a dainty demoiselle she was. And my aunt Guyon said that though the little creature's garments were sadly begrimed and torn, from the fineness of their texture she must be well born. Thereupon they decided that they would rear her as their own, and she should be to them another daughter.

They questioned her, hoping to glean a clue to her history, for they knew from her complexion and the few lisping words that fell from her lips that she was English. But, ready as she was with baby prattle, when asked her name she only shook her head and

laughed roguishly. Therefore they called her Barbe, after a child of their own who had died; also because in the old French tongue Barbe means a pearl brought from afar. For notwithstanding that they had already many children, these worthy folk, my uncle and aunt Guyon, looked upon this nameless baby stranger, English though she was, as a pearl of great price sent to them by Providence, an addition to their worldly possessions to be treasured and cherished.

And as gold put out at interest grows and increases, so during all these years had their generosity to Barbe been enriched by her love and filial devotion. Ever too she bore their name, and it was understood, as a matter of course, that she was to share alike with the others in the inheritance my uncle Guyon would leave to his children. Thus it was that we had long ceased to think of the fair-haired, violet-eyed lass save as belonging to this swarthy brood; for is there not sometimes seen a paler and a darker rose growing upon one stem? But Barbe was English, and it was the realization of the fact, now to us so momentous, that raised so strange a tumult within my breast,—one moment a flame which would break forth; the next, like ice in my veins. I had never experienced the like before, nor did I again for many a day,—not until — But that comes later in my story.

When she paused for breath, I said, striving to speak quietly, yet in the saying feeling a strange tightening at my throat,—

“And you, Barbe?”

“And I?” she repeated wonderingly.

“Yes; are you not also of these people?”

Scarce had the words passed my lips ere I re-

gretted them, for the girl recoiled as though I had in savage cruelty dealt her a blow. The next moment, however, with crimsoned cheek and flashing eyes, she turned upon me.

"Normand, how dare you?" she cried passionately. "What have I done that you should doubt my loyalty? Why do you reproach me thus and accuse me of siding with our enemies, because, forsooth, I have shown a sympathy for these poor demoiselles cast, as by the sea, upon an alien shore; because I am glad, now when the tide bids fair to waft them home again? For shame! Where is your generosity? You are unjust; you would have me hate every living thing south of the French border; but — but — I can not forget that God rules over the southern land as well as over New France, that in those distant provinces are living wives, mothers, daughters, who watch and weep and pray for their soldier heroes, even as we do daily here at home."

The unconscious eloquence of the young maid moved me deeply; but I reflected, with a touch of bitterness, it was only natural she should feel thus; 't was the stirring of her English blood, the instinct of kindred, stronger than any tie of love, or circumstance, or fortune.

She could not help it, dear child. As the birds of the south that have nested in our orchards fly home again presently to a sunnier clime, so the voice of nature was bidding the heart of little Barbe to spread its wings and take flight for the land of her birth. Was it for us to reproach or blame?

I could not endure to have her misjudge me as she had done. For in her flashing eyes, and the indignation wherewith she confronted me, there was nothing of the pretty petulance of old, whereat I had

so often found amusement, but rather a depth of feeling and a fire which made me understand that our demoiselle was no longer a child, but was fast growing into a noble woman. And never to me had she appeared so comely.

So I said gravely, and with as much gentleness of manner as I could command, —

“Not so fast, Babette! And, I pray you, be more sparing of your upbraiding, lest you may regret it later. I had no thought to question your devotion to our cause; I only gave utterance to the truth which, albeit unwelcome, was brought forcibly to my mind by your chatter of the demoiselles your schoolmates. You too are a *Bostonnaise*.”

“And for this reason have you come to hate me, Normand?” she faltered tremulously; “have the mad fury of the conflict, the anxiety of these days of siege, crazed your brain and turned you against even poor little Barbe?”

“No! A thousand times, no! But, my God, Barbe,” I broke out, pressed beyond all patience, “your friends are overjoyed at the opportunity of being taken home; what more natural than that you should wish to go with them?”

“Ha, ha, ha! Is that all?” cried Barbe, with merry laugh. “So you thought to see the last of me, sir? Never fear, cousin,” — here the tremor in her voice moved me as does the sound of gay music that yet has in it a plaintive note, — “never fear. Mayhap my parents whom I never knew, lived and married in New England, and I first saw the light in that far-away province which our *Sieur Cadillac* and you too, Normand, have told me of as fair. But it is God who gives to every one a country and a home. His providence has made me French; my heart

was in the defence of Quebec. Nevertheless, I must own, the miseries of the siege were increased tenfold in my eyes because it was to me a struggle of brother against brother. But, for the rest, your people are my people, Normand, and for all my life I want no other home than New France."

Thereat she stretched out her pretty hands to me with so appealing and artless a grace that I took them in my own and raised them to my lips in cavalier fashion, but with brotherly tenderness.

A weight was lifted off my spirits as she spoke the frank, ingenuous words which told me in effect that never, even in her young girl's dreams, had she longed for the land of the south; while at her assurance, 'your people are my people,' I felt an unwonted happiness, which was not the security of a hope fulfilled, but rather like a voice bidding me strive and pray for, and hold aloof from all unworthiness, if one day I would aspire to win perchance a noble and true-hearted maiden to cast her fortune with mine in wedded love with those self-same words that little Barbe had chosen in her childlike unconsciousness.

But still, in spite of her loyalty to us, a danger, like a shadow fallen athwart the threshold, threatened gloom to the house,—a shadow that even the sunlight of this perfect day of the Indian summer could not banish. Therefore I answered with emotion,—

"God be thanked, you are, I believe, little one, as true a daughter of New France as any demoiselle in the land." And then I went on, choosing my language so as not to affright her too greatly. "Nevertheless, among the *Bostonnais* prisoners to be exchanged there are those who know your story,

and mayhap the English may demand that you be given up."

At this she uttered a shriek of dismay, and, unheeding my efforts to calm her, broke away from me and rushed from the little parlor where I had found her dusting with a brush of rabbit's fur the wood of the new chairs and tables my father had got over in the last ship from France. In the living-room beyond, my aunt Guyon, with my mother and Madame Cadillac, were engaged with their needlework.

To them Barbe ran, and in a passion of weeping threw herself upon the neck of my aunt, and sobbed out what I had told her, begging piteously to be hidden away until the southerners should be gone. Her intelligence created consternation among the women.

Scarce had they recovered from their first alarm and begun more quietly to devise feminine plans against the contingency, when, sure enough, there came an imperative "rat-ta-tat" at the house door. Anticipating what the knock might forebode, I went down the stairs and opened the door. It was as I feared. Without, waited a posse of the Governor's body-guard and with them the English officer to whose charge had been committed the exchange of prisoners and the business of effecting the return of the demoiselles to their native province.

It was the same young *Bostonnais* who had come with the message to which we had returned so effective an answer; verily Sir Phipps had been more courteous toward him had he intrusted this affair of the exchange to another; but the doughty Admiral had no such delicacy, and to Monsieur de Frontenac it mattered not. The officer was indeed

of good appearance, with the manners and bearing of a gentleman. Moreover, his scarlet coat and cap with its band of gold became him mightily.

Noting that I wore the uniform of the King's troops, he gave me a military salute.

"Sir," he said, "I am come to demand of one François Guyon that he deliver up for safe convoy to her kindred the young maiden called Barbara Guyon, but known to be of English parentage. I have here a command from Comte Frontenac that she shall be permitted to receive from me the message."

At this, one of the guards stepped forward and showed to me a paper duly signed by the Governor's own hand.

How angered I was; how I cursed the Bostonnais for his audacity! Yet soberer thought reminded me he was but engaged in the performance of his duty. Accordingly, with an effort to restrain my choler, I replied, —

"Sir, an you wish to find François Guyon, you must seek him in his home, or on his wharves at Beauport. As for the demoiselle of whom you speak, she is indeed in this dwelling. If you will enter, and wait in this room for a brief space, I will carry to her your message and bring you her answer to it with but short delay."

Therewith I ushered him up the stairs and into the little parlor, the soldiers remaining outside.

"Pardon, sir," he said, as I was about to leave him, "I can accept no communication by proxy; I must needs see the maiden and have speech with her."

I would have liked to run him through with my sword for his impudence. Nevertheless, with as good an imitation of the polished complaisance of our

Sieur Cadillac as I could master upon such short notice and under such stress of circumstance, I went in search of Barbe, since she could have no choice but to receive him. When I returned to the living-room, the women were again weeping, and more readily would I have fought all the fleet of Sir Phipps than face these tearful ladies with my news.

"No, no! Not a step will I take to greet this officer," declared Mam'selle Barbe, with a determined stamp of her foot. "What? I *must* see and speak with him, you say, Cousin Normand? Did ever any one hear the like! How could you, how could even his Excellency the Governor, constrain me to do so? If my Lord Frontenac should so far put aside his regal courtesy, — and the event is scarce possible, — but even if he should send his soldiers to drag me into yonder audience room against my will, yet could I not keep my eyes closed fast? Why, the King and all his ministers could not *compel* me to *see* this envoy, if I chose otherwise. As for speaking with him, who, pray, could force me to say a word, if I wished to remain dumb?"

Thinking it wiser to fall in with the humor of the lively lass, I said, forcing a laugh: "Dearest Barbe, your independent spirit is much to be admired, and I commend your taste in not wishing to bestow as much as a glance upon this Englishman, albeit some foolish demoiselles might consider him pleasing of aspect and agreeable in conversation. Nevertheless, if you do not yourself tell this envoy you are resolved to remain in New France, he will report that my uncle and aunt Guyon have detained you by compulsion. Moreover, if you show not alacrity to obey the behest of the Governor and receive him, you may as

well pack your boxes for Boston forthwith, for his Excellency will not brook the least opposition to his orders, as many a powerful man in the province knows full well."

Whether little Barbe understood the folly of resistance and was affrighted at my threat of the Governor's displeasure, or whether it was that her woman's curiosity was piqued by my description of the foreign officer, I can not say, so incomprehensible are the reasonings of a young maid. Scarce had I ceased my argument, when her mood changed, although she was not wont to pay such respect to my powers of persuasion.

"Well, well, cousin, an you think best, I will even see and speak to this stranger," she said with a most captivating air of docility, — the little minx!

Thereupon I conducted her into the parlor. The officer rose from his chair as we entered and made Barbe a profound bow, — he was clearly a man of breeding. As for our little maid, she truly astonished me. The curtsy she swept him did honor to the training in manners she had received from her teachers the Ursulines, and her mien was so dignified and withal so modest that I thought she had never appeared to so good advantage.

The Englishman was surprised, I perceived, and in some degree disconcerted, at finding himself confronted by so stately a demoiselle, when he had expected to behold a schoolgirl. Barbe was scarce older than her friends the Demoiselles Clarke, but my aunt Guyon and Madame Cadillac had pinned up her hair and cast about her shoulders a lace kerchief, and thus, as by a fairy wand, transformed her for the occasion from a comely little lass into a charming young woman. For although she was

paler than her wont, the tears that still gleamed in her eyes gave to her face a pathetic beauty.

"I crave your pardon, young mistress," said the Englishman, "in that I have come to you upon a distressful errand. You have been made acquainted with its nature?"

She inclined her head.

"Then I will spare you the rehearsal of formalities. Suffice to say, in accordance with the arrangement between my Lord Admiral Sir William Phipps and his Excellency Governor Frontenac, I am come to bid you, an English maiden cast by the fortunes of war among the people of New France, to make ready to return to your kinsfolk in the colonies of his Gracious Majesty the King of England, and to tell you that you will be safely convoyed thither in care of the wife of one of the exchanged prisoners, by the British fleet under the command of the Lord Admiral."

Having suffered him to conclude his speech without interruption, — an ordeal for her impetuosity, — my little lady now involuntarily vouchsafed me another surprise. Instead of meeting his demand with the outburst of scorn I expected, she replied with demure self-possession. For one too who had averred she would keep her eyes shut rather than see the officer, it seemed to me she glanced at him oftener than was necessary, and even, confound his soldier luck, gave him a smile once or twice. Her answer, nevertheless, was spoken with decision.

"Sir," she said, "be so kind as to convey to your Admiral Sir William Phipps my thanks for his interest in my welfare. Say to him in addition, however, that although I may be the child of English parents, Providence has made me a daughter

of New France and a subject of his August Majesty King Louis the Fourteenth. I desire neither to change my country nor my allegiance."

The Bostonnais was not so easily to be dismissed.

"Fair mistress," he replied with another bow, and a look of admiration for which, respectful as it was, I could have throttled him, — "Fair mistress, your speech does honor to the steadfast nature which bespeaks you to be indeed of the English race. King Louis might well be loath to lose, and his Majesty of England account it well to gain, so loyal a subject. It is only natural that one brought up from childhood in this region of the maple and the fir should regret to leave so beautiful a land. But we have a saying, 'Once an Englishman always an Englishman,' and it is the same, I see, with the gentler sex. A little English baby girl will grow up into a lovely Englishwoman, no matter in what part of the world she may be reared. You can no more deny your nationality, my fair young lady, than you can help the color of your hair and eyes."

Where had the fellow learned his trick of compliment? I had not thought, out of the lands of the Sun King, there was so much politeness and grace of speech. Nathless it pleased me little enough, because Mademoiselle Barbe took all his fine sayings with the utmost complaisance.

"Oh, it is not altogether a matter of allegiance," she began, "but — why, all that I love is here."

"Ah, yes, the ties of affection," he responded, as though with a sympathetic understanding. "Yet you will be happy in the prospect of a reunion with your kindred. And then there will be the charm of seeing a new country, and visiting the settlements of the south, — not only Boston, but per-

chance the fine town of New York. Will you not be seated? At least it will not come amiss to you to hear something in regard to the country of your birth."

Fascinated for the nonce, Barbe sank down upon a chair, and dropping into another beside her, he discoursed long, both of the natural beauties and the many attractions of the province south of us, while I sat sulking and fuming in a corner, thinking that any moment Madame Cadillac would come sweeping into the room, or my aunt Guyon would make her appearance, so eager were they, I knew, for him to be gone.

At last, taking out his watch,—I had thought when he came to ask the surrender he had been taught a lesson in that respect; but no, these Englishmen must needs measure off the time as though they were arbiters of fate; so, looking at his watch, the *Bostonnais* started up, saying,—

"Excuse me, fair mistress, your courteous attention has led me to forget that our time ashore is short. If I wait upon you again within an hour, will you be ready to set off with our little company; or is it your preference to join us at the point of embarkation on the *Esplanade*?"

Within an hour! Flattered by his pretty speeches and smooth arguments, eager to gaze upon the scenes which she had now heard described with the enthusiasm of one who loved them well, would Barbe, hoping no doubt to come back to us some day,—would Barbe go, after all?

I sprang to my feet, determined to remind her of the resolution she had so recently formed,—to hold her to it,—to fight this man, if necessary, envoy though he was, and even at the risk of expiating the

offence in the donjon of the Château. And then, with a sinking of the heart, I realized how futile all this would be. No, the issue depended upon Barbe alone; her word must decide it.

"Shall I be ready within an hour?" she repeated, rising too, and smiling archly. "In faith, no, good sir, nor within a lifetime. Look you; although your country may be the land of my birth, I should be in it an alien and a stranger."

"Believe me, we should find your kindred; there must be some clue to be followed up," he urged.

"My true kindred are here," returned the girl firmly, glancing round the small parlor as though it formed the horizon of her happiness. "A more loving mother, a more indulgent father, than Père and Mère Guyon, I could not have had."

"But your real father was an officer, it is surmised, — there may be awaiting you in England some golden inheritance, — in these times many such revert to the crown, the heirs having disappeared in the wilderness of the New World."

"God's providence is my inheritance," she responded gravely; "He has provided for me amply and well."

"My dear young lady," exclaimed the Bostonnais officer, at last losing patience. "Comte Frontenac has given his word that every British subject within the walls of Quebec shall be delivered over to my Lord Admiral Sir William Phipps. A British subject you are, whether you will or not, therefore you must go."

"*Must go!*" cried Barbe, with a flash of anger which, whether it were French or English, disturbed the lieutenant mightily.

"Yes, or the Admiral will renew hostilities."

A scornful laugh broke from the lips of our spirited demoiselle, but with a discretion beyond her years she checked the retort that would have followed it.

"I will go to Comte Frontenac," she said simply, turning toward me. "Normand, take me to him."

And conduct her to the Château I did, the envoy and his escort following some hundred paces behind, not obtruding upon us, yet keeping us in view lest perchance Barbe's friends might spirit her away and place her in hiding.

Of her interview with the Governor, the recollection will never fade from my memory. As I write, there arises before the eyes of my mind the picture of the Castle's audience chamber, its wainscot and rafters of cedar wood, its background of the skins of wild beasts, and tapestries and rich paintings from France.

In his carved chair which he had just pushed back from his writing-table, sat Comte Frontenac, his noble head thrown back in surprise, the stern and imperious expression of countenance habitual to him now softened to a look of almost fatherly gentleness, as he listened to the appeal of the young girl who had fearlessly demanded admittance to his presence.

Never shall I forget how Barbe looked as she stood there. At one moment her eyes filled with tears and her voice trembled with emotion; the next it thrilled with indignation as she protested that of her free will she would never go to live in the south. And all the while she spoke with an artlessness, a maidenly modesty, yet with an eloquence that amazed me.

As she went on, with a naïve lack of self-consciousness, the Governor began to nod his head in assent to what she said.

Finally, turning to me, who had played the part of a silent witness, he bade me summon his orderly. When the latter appeared, Comte Frontenac asked if the Bostonnais envoy was without.

"Yes, your Excellency," answered the aide, "and anxious to have speech with you."

"I will receive him."

Forthwith the lieutenant was admitted.

"Monsieur," said the Governor, addressing him as if he knew not his errand, — "Monsieur, what further business brings you to us?"

"Your Excellency," rejoined the envoy, with formal politeness, "among the English children in Quebec to be exchanged with the prisoners of war, mention was made to me of this young maiden who stands at your right hand. Her name was on the list of those whom you authorized me to escort to the Admiral's ship, where preparations have been made for their comfort and safe conduct to Boston."

"And?" queried Comte Frontenac, dryly.

"Well, she will not go, your Excellency."

"Well indeed, then, it seems," said the Governor, while a gleam of humor shot from his keen eye.

"Or perhaps ill, your Excellency, since the consequences may not be so light as you would imply; also, there is your Excellency's word at stake."

"Monsieur lieutenant," said Comte Frontenac, rising and preparing to go out, for it was the hour when he was wont to go down to the Palace of the Intendant to preside over the doings of the Council, — "Monsieur lieutenant," he repeated in a tone of condescending, half-jesting irony, "I promised your chief, Sir William Phipps, to do everything possible to facilitate the return to their homes of any English

who might be found in this province, and I have kept my pledge. But, Lord of all Canada as I am, and Supreme Representative of King Louis in the Western World, I never presumed to consider it within my power to move a woman from her will. Nor do I think, if rumor speaks true of his experience, would your valiant Admiral have the hardihood to attempt it. If this demoiselle wills not to go, she will not, and there's the end of it."

He laughed lightly, and then continued with gravity: "In all seriousness, although I would let it be known that she is free to go if she so please, the agreement was never meant to cover this case. The demoiselle has been from her infancy the legally adopted daughter of François Guyon and his good wife. Tell your Admiral I would give up Quebec itself rather than deliver over to his government, against her wish, this daughter of New France. Moreover, she is no longer a child, but almost a young woman of marriageable age, and she has declared it to be her intention to take a husband in Quebec. A woman may marry where she lists, lieutenant, if her parents select not otherwise; and, since she becomes by law of the nationality of her spouse, I must say, monsieur, I see small chance of your transforming into a British subject this most wilful demoiselle."

Thus, with a polished and urbane sarcasm, he dismissed the discomfited envoy.

As the latter passed Barbe on his way out, however, he said to her in a low tone, with a respectful obeisance: "Farewell, sweet mistress; in your choice I wish you all content and happiness. Nevertheless a Bostonnaise you are, and a Bostonnaise you will discover yourself to be some day. Perchance that

day lies in the far distant future, but come it will. Farewell."

For answer, Barbe gave him an incredulous smile and shook her pretty head.

"Sir, we English hope to make you another visit in the spring," he added to me.

"Monsieur, I trust we shall have the honor of meeting you before that time," I answered with as significant a courtesy.

When he was gone, the girl, too overcome with emotion to find words of thanks for the Governor, impulsively caught the hand of Comte Frontenac and kissed it.

"Remember, mademoiselle, you are to take a husband in Quebec," said his Excellency, with smiling graciousness.

Thereupon he passed out of the audience chamber, and a few minutes later, as we went forth from the old Château, we saw him, accompanied by his military escort, crossing the Place d'Armes, on his way to the deliberations of the Council.

CHAPTER EIGHTH

FROM THE COURT OF THE SUN KING

ITROW the lordly Sir Phipps swore roundly at the report the officer carried back to him. Still, he had clearly no mind to match his wit against that of our caustic Governor, in a wrangle over so trifling a matter as the guardianship of a saucy demoiselle who, despite her pretty airs and graces, had but anon passed the age of pinafores.

With as proud a showing as might be, therefore, in view of his recent disasters, he sailed away to the south. A few days later, so close upon the departure of the British that but for the fogs at sea they must have met, the King's ship, known to be on its way from France, was sighted down the river.

From the ramparts and the Esplanade, all Quebec watched her with rejoicing as she came up the broad expanse of the stream; and foremost at the landing-place were Thérèse and myself, since we had reason to hope that our Sieur would be one of the Embuscade's half-score of passengers, — at this season she was not like to bring more.

Happily, we were not disappointed, for he was come on the ship; and never did he appear to me more distinguished than as he stepped again upon the soil of New France.

He was habited in a coat of azure, broidered with gold and full plaited around the waist, with crimson epaulettes and the sleeves turned up with crimson;

also, red small clothes and silk stockings, low-cut shoes of the finest leather, and a gold sword belt, this being the apparel he had worn upon the occasion of his presentation to the Grand Monarque. And verily there seemed to linger about him something of the atmosphere of grandeur and refinement that surrounds the Court of the Sun King. But although he appeared even handsomer and was more richly clothed than of old, the heart of Cadillac was not changed, as I noted with thankfulness.

The ship had anchored in mid-stream, and the passengers were sent ashore in a boat.

Among the throng waiting to greet them, I saw the gaze of De la Mothe search eagerly for the face of Thérèse, and when he set foot upon the ground once more and she pressed forward to welcome him with their child in her arms, he clasped her to his breast and kissed her with a respectful affection that was good to see. Then, bending his head, he touched the soft cheek of baby Madeleine with his bearded lips, whereat the little creature laughed, and clapped her chubby hands, as though in truth she remembered her father, albeit that was impossible, she being only a young infant when he went away.

"I must first to Comte Frontenac, Normand, good friend," said my brother, clasping my hand. "Take my wife home, and then, if you will, follow me to the Château."

I set out to do his bidding and convoy to the house madame with the little Madeleine, and Barbe, who accompanied them, yet I was vexed by the fear that ere I could reach the Castle, he would have entered, and I must perforce remain cooling my heels in the courtyard, against his coming out.

But scarce were we clear of the crowd when we

encountered Robert de Reaume, who forthwith constituted himself the cavalier of our dainty demoiselle.

If he thought to annoy me by so doing, however, I quickly repaid him, resigned to him the care of both ladies, and turned back to Cadillac, who was still trying to make his way through the throng, supported by a posse of honor from the Governor's guard, which had been sent down to the ship to meet the bearer of the despatches, whoever the King's messenger might be.

Despite this formality of a guard of honor, the good townspeople pressed close upon our *Sieur*, some anxious for news from the old country and the court, others eager to tell of the siege and to ask how the ship had eluded the English. Even one or two of the more prominent citizens walked by his side a few paces to put a question indirectly of political import, perhaps concerning the temper of *Comte Pontchartrain* and the other ministers.

Bowing from right to left, and with a courteous word to those who addressed him, he yet told them nothing, beyond, perchance, to one the answer: "Saw I the King, you would know? Ay, truly, I was honored with an audience by his August Majesty, and he made many inquiries regarding his colonists of New France."

To another, "Pardon, my friend, it would not be becoming of me to give you news before I have waited upon *Comte Frontenac* and delivered to him the despatches wherewith I am commissioned by the King's Ministers."

"Ah, madame! you would know the fashions at Court? In sooth, the ladies are still wearing robes of velvet and brocade, with silken jupes; and there is, as of yore, some small show of rouge, powder, and

patches. As for the cut of the costumes, I cannot say, but I have brought a brave one to Madame Cadillac, which I doubt not she will be ready to exhibit to you."

Thus we went on, until we reached the Château. After we had passed through the entrance, a soldier at the inner door would have had me wait in the anteroom, but, saying curtly, "My secretary," Cadillac obtained that I should witness his reception by Comte Frontenac, — a thoughtfulness designed in part to gratify me, although I dare say he was not unwilling I should have proof of the esteem in which he was held abroad, and the claim he had upon the good graces of the viceroy.

The room into which we were presently ushered was the smaller audience chamber, the same whither I had been conducted with Barbe on the evening when she had come to protest against being carried away by the English.

Again the Governor sat at his writing-table, — he was ever as ready with the pen as with the sword, — and as our Sieur saluted him with a half-proud yet ceremonious respect of manner, and a courtliness that could only have been learned at St. Germain or Versailles, I watched with an absorbed interest the two men, now met for the first time.

The most illustrious, Louis de Baude, was at this period full seventy years of age. Time had crowned his handsome head with a chaplet of silver, and his face was seamed with the record of the toils, and passions, and cares that had beset his fiery soul.

What a marvellous yet checkered career his had been, I reflected, as having made my bow to him as the representative of the King, I stood back against the wall, while La Mothe went forward. And as I

looked, I wondered how his Excellency, a man of courts and camps, had been willing to withdraw from the brilliant society of St. Germain and Versailles, to forego the prospect of adding to the glory of his military reputation upon European battle-fields, that he might rule over these distant lands of the Sun King, and live among plain merchants and traders, wild bush-rangers or *coureurs de bois*, with savage Indians for foes.

A soldier at the age of fifteen, he had been a *maréchal de camp*, or brigadier-general, at twenty-six; an audacious and notable figure at Court. Moreover, it was said that in his prime he had been ruined by his own extravagances and those of his wife, Anne de la Grange-Trianon. Rumor had it, too, that, proud and choleric as he was of disposition, he proved powerless to curb the temper of his beautiful Comtesse, and he was given the government of New France to deliver him from her, and also to afford him some means of living.

However that may have been, despite the many manifestations of his pride and intolerance to which we in Quebec were continually treated, his endless quarrels with the clergy, with Champigny, the Intendant Callières of Montreal, — in fact, with every one who dared oppose him, — he was the greatest governor New France has known in my day, or ever will know, to my thinking.

Such was the man before whom our *Sieur* now presented himself.

Turning from his letter-writing, Monsieur de Frontenac suffered his eyes to rest upon the King's messenger with a stern and searching gaze.

La Mothe was at this time about thirty years old. Although his sojourn in France had added to the

polish of his address, it had not deprived him of the Gascon impetuosity of speech and action which had first attracted me to him.

Did Comte Frontenac with his knowledge of men discern in the young cavalier a kindred spirit; did he recognize in our Sieur Cadillac as fierce a temper, as bold and restless an ambition, as keen a sarcasm as his own?

At least I think his scrutiny prepossessed him in favor of my brother. 'T was like the flash when two finely tempered blades of Toledo steel meet and each finds the other true.

"Monsieur the Comte de Frontenac, Chief and President of the Provinces of New France," began Cadillac, bowing low and giving to the Governor the title he ever so strenuously claimed in the Council.

"You are the bearer of despatches from his Majesty?" demanded Frontenac, tersely.

"Yes, your Excellency;" and with another formal salutation Cadillac handed to him the packet.

"Anything else?" demanded the Comte, as he broke the seal of the documents.

"Nothing, your Excellency, save a letter from Monsieur the Comte de Pontchartrain, commending me to you," returned La Mothe.

"You are fortunate in bringing back to Canada such strong credentials, monsieur," said Frontenac, graciously; and as Cadillac presented the letter, the Governor added: "Very good, monsieur. I will ask you to wait in the salon for a few minutes, while I peruse these despatches and look over the missive of my friend the illustrious Comte Pontchartrain; after which I shall be happy to receive from you any information you have acquired abroad that may in your judgment be of service to New France. Or,

go home, but come back and dine with me this evening. You may perhaps have forgotten the flavor of our bear's meat and venison. Moreover, I have no other guests bidden for to-night, and we can therefore discuss your news great and small over the viands such as they are, and the best eau de vie that Canada affords. I regret that I cannot offer you the fine wines to which, no doubt, you have been accustomed in the palaces of the great," he concluded bitterly.

"Monsieur de Frontenac, your command is my pleasure," returned Cadillac, well understanding the compliment and promise of favor it implied. "Further, I beg to say, although it may occasionally of late have been my fortune to dine in high places, I have never esteemed myself more honored than I am now by your invitation; nor more fortunate in being afforded an opportunity to sketch the course of events in France as they passed before my poor observation, — with the hope that they may be of some slight interest to so distinguished and noble a host."

Comte Frontenac smiled, well pleased at this tribute to his dignity from one just out from the mother country.

"Also," continued De la Mothe, "I beg to inform your Excellency that my Lord the Comte de Pontchartrain has sent over by me to you a goodly present of Sillery and Burgundy, to which I have been so bold as to add a pipe of Hermitage, whereof I pray your acceptance. I will give orders to have it sent up from the ship without delay."

"Thanks, thanks, chevalier. Then, when it is settled, you must taste the first of it with me," answered the Governor, with genial good humor. "Ah,

Sieur Cadillac, the bouquet and flavor of the Hermitage are, I am sure, most luscious; and, grateful as may be the sparkling Sillery and the rich wine of Burgundy to the palate of a whilom courtier who has not quite forgotten the art of good living, yet far more warming to his heart is the evidence that his friends in France still hold him in remembrance."

Thereupon Cadillac withdrew, to return later.

The letter from the King's Minister, whereof he showed me a copy, was not merely a commend of a strange cavalier, from one noble friend to another, but was, in effect, a suggestion from the King himself. Afterwards I made a transcript of it, which I now find among my papers. Thus it runs:—

"To the most Excellent Lord, Louis de Baude, Comte de Frontenac and Viceroy of New France.

"The Sieur de la Mothe Cadillac, a gentleman of Acadia, having been ordered to embark for the service of the King on the Embuscade, which vessel brought him to France, His Majesty, being informed that during his absence his habitation has been ruined, hopes that Monsieur le Comte de Frontenac, Governor of His Majesty's Provinces of New France, will find it convenient to give the Chevalier Cadillac such employment as he may find proper for his services, and that he will assist him as he can."

Such was the beginning of the friendship and patronage which Comte Frontenac ever showed my brother De la Mothe. Cadillac was appointed lieutenant and then captain of the troops of the Colony. Later, he was made a Knight of the Order of St. Louis, Ensign of the Navy, and in requital for his services received a donation from the public treasury.

The keen repartee and ready speech of "mon chevalier" were like a piquant sauce to the brilliant dinners which the Governor gave at the Château; but alack, he made the quarrels of his patron his own, and his pen, too often dipped in gall, sent back to the Old World sketches of Comte Frontenac's opponents which even I recognized as much too highly colored, not to say, untrue.

I will but mention the desperate straits of the Colony during the next year; also the plans for the descent upon the southern provinces in regard to which my brother was again summoned to France. Again the project came to naught, but, at De la Mothe's recommendation, a fleet of small vessels was built, to repel any contemplated invasion of the St. Lawrence.

In the mean time our undaunted Governor had broken the English and Indian blockade of the Outawa which for three years had prevented the bringing down from Michilimackinac the great accumulation of beaver skins, the delay whereof almost bankrupted New France and brought her people to famine.

It was my good fortune to go up with the Governor's company to Montreal to witness the success of this enterprise. Truly, it was a spectacle to gladden the heart. We found the town swarming with Indians, voyageurs, and coureurs de bois.

Two hundred canoes had arrived laden with the precious pelts, and the citizens, wild with joy at sight of the wealth for which they had waited so long, again hailed Monsieur de Frontenac as the Father of the People, the Preserver of the Country.

The winter that followed was a season of unusual gayety, especially among the young officers and

seigneurs whom Monsieur de Frontenac, despite his seventy-four years, delighted to gather about him.

In this circle, as brother-in-law of Cadillac, I was admitted. All went merrily until the Governor set us to the acting of theatricals.

We played two pieces with flattering encouragement. Then a disagreement arose between the Comte and Monseigneur de St. Vallier anent a certain play which rumor falsely said his Excellency intended to have performed; and thus did our interval of peace end in discord.

My sister Thérèse had not liked over-much these diversions, from the beginning. Therefore she advanced no objection when one day, after La Mothe and I had come from the Castle, he asked abruptly, —

“Thérèse, what think you? Comte Frontenac has offered me the command of the Upper Indian Nations at Michilimackinac.”

“Eh bien, mon ami, when are we to set out?” she replied, starting to her feet as though on the instant ready for the journey, arduous as it was sure to be.

“My dear Thérèse,” said her husband with a kiss, for notwithstanding his occasional outbursts of temper, his sometime moroseness, he was a lover still, — “My dear Thérèse, that distant post is a wild and dreary place. Neither bread nor meat is eaten there, and no food is to be had save a wretched kind of fish and the coarse Indian corn. Even the latter is worth fifty francs the minot.”

“Ah! you will not accept the appointment?”

“I must; the offer is in effect a command.”

“Then I will go too,” she averred. “Didst doubt it, La Mothe? Do you not know I fear no hardship with you? Have I behaved or borne myself

so ill in past stress that you think I am fit but for this soft life we have spent for the last year in Quebec?"

"Far from it, Thérèse. God knows you have ever been most brave and steadfast; many a man might envy your courage and power of endurance. Yet —" He broke off hastily, but his glance at the cradle of birch bark fashioned like a tiny canoe, that stood before the hearth, completed the sentence as well as words would have done.

In that cradle lay asleep their infant boy.

The little Madeleine, now a sportive child of five years, might have been intrusted for a space to the charge of her aunts, my sisters, but how could this baby son, Cadillac's heir, be left behind to other than its mother's care? Still less should this young life be exposed to the severity of the climate of Michilimackinac. Thérèse fell weeping upon her husband's breast. Her heart was rent by a fierce struggle between her wifely devotion and her maternal love.

At this moment the child awoke and cried, and mother love conquered.

Springing to the little canoe bed, Thérèse caught up the baby Antoine, all rosy with sleep and sweet as a budding flower, pressed fond, impulsive kisses upon his soft neck and round cheek, and presently, with a laugh that was half a sob, thrust him into his proud father's arms.

Cadillac laughed too and caressed the child, who forthwith thrust out its little hands and grasped the mustaches of the bold captain.

"Ma foi! my young combatant, if such is thy manner of warfare thou wouldst vanquish me in a trice," exclaimed La Mothe, giving him back to his mother.

"Yes, yes, I see it is my duty to remain behind," said Thérèse, sorrowfully.

"How I wish you could accompany me, sweet one!" rejoined her husband. "The wilderness would not be dreary with you to brighten it; but 't is indeed no place for a woman. Besides, I shall need you here to look after my affairs, since in this expedition I have promised to take Normand with me, — is it not so, brother?"

"If Normand goes, I am half content, for I know he will care for your comfort," interposed Thérèse, generously; and from that time, finding that she could thus best serve the interests of the husband whom she so dearly loved, she made no further objection to staying at Quebec.

CHAPTER NINTH

AT THE INTENDANT'S PALACE

HAPPY was I to have obtained from "mon chevalier" permission to accompany him to his new post.

Although welcomed among the pleasant company at the Château, I found there little chance of personal advancement. At home I missed my mother, who had died two years before, and my father, grown a decade older in sorrow at her loss, was dissatisfied with me, because I did not choose to take the partnership with my brothers which he offered me in his business.

Had I obeyed his wish, no doubt I should be far better off in the matter of temporal provision than I am to-day. But I was young; and I longed for the stirring adventures of a roving life once more, even though it was like to be fraught with perils.

To abandon this ambition and settle down to the humdrum and prosperous ease of a merchant trader of Quebec would be, it seemed to me, like to a man's selling his birthright of liberty for a mess of the pottage of material comfort.

My temper being out of joint, even the frivolous moods and humors of my whilom childish friend, little Barbe, had chafed and vexed me, — little Barbe, now grown into a stately demoiselle whom all the young cavaliers of Quebec society were eager to wait upon, whom they sought out at fêtes, filling

her ears with pretty speeches and compliments, until her head was wellnigh turned with their flatteries.

For a time Barbe had been removed from aught to distract her from her studies, by being sent to dwell at the Convent of the Ursulines; and I meanwhile had been much occupied, both with the papers of my brother De la Mothe, and some accounts that I kept for my father.

In summer, when I went to Beauport, there was always Robert de Reaume paying court to the girl, half in jest, yet finding an evident fascination in her bright eyes and gay repartee.

In the autumn of 1694 my uncle had taken a house in the town and bidden all his friends to a grand entertainment therein. Since then Barbe had been as a butterfly, with a taste only for the gorgeous; or perhaps I might better compare her with that tiny creature thrilling with the joy of existence, the humming-bird, which craves but the sweetness of life, and darts away in affright at the breath of the softest wind.

Puzzled by the change from the merry pranks which she sometimes played upon me in the early days after my return from Acadia, to the shyness with which she now avoided me, I wondered vaguely if her fancy had been caught by the fine uniform and polite phrases of the Bostonnais officer who long ago came to demand that the maid should be sent back to her own people.

Again, when I beheld her so sprightly and arch, yet modest withal, toward all the gallants who sought her favor, so ready in reply to the inane sallies that Robert de Reaume passed off as wit, I made up my mind she was but a shallow coquette without heart or feeling.

Upon one point I was determined, — she might have all the world at her feet, that is, our very small world of Quebec, but she should not make sport of me.

Accordingly, on many occasions I let her know I considered her frivolity most unbecoming. Thus, with me she never jested, but, on the other hand, I fear she held my sage advice but lightly, since she continued to do everything of which I disapproved, as if with the special purpose to provoke me.

On the same day that Cadillac spoke to me of his expedition, I began to make arrangements for the journey into the wilderness. The following evening there was a gathering at the Palace of the Intendant in honor of the fête-day of Madame de Champigny.

Although Governor Frontenac and the Intendant de Champigny were during the greater part of the time at odds, their animosities did not create as insurmountable a barrier between them as might be supposed.

The wife of the Intendant was, moreover, greatly respected by every one, and on this occasion society, whatever its political views, came to pay its respects to her.

For myself, I esteemed it the more incumbent upon me to offer my devoirs to this good lady, since I was on the eve of leaving my native town for an indefinite period; the opportunity was favorable also for making my adieux to many acquaintances of whom I might not otherwise have a chance to take leave. Then, too, Barbe would be there, and, despite the strangeness that had come between us, I wished to tell her the news.

When I entered the Palace, my ears were greeted

by the melody of the inspiriting chanson to his Glorious Majesty, composed by Lulli, the King's favorite musician. I had, however, been too often a guest here to need the guidance of its strains, or of the servants in attendance, in order to find my way to the salon, where I forthwith presented myself.

Madame de Champigny stood at one end of the room, surrounded by a little group of her friends.

As I bent over her hand and murmured my congratulations, she said, —

"Normand, it is long since we have had the pleasure of welcoming you. I fear you young officers find our evenings passing dull; nevertheless to-night," and she glanced toward a group of demoiselles and gallants engaged in the romping game of *Le Pont d'Avignon*, "perhaps to-night you may find the time pass pleasantly."

"Madame," I replied with a bow, "a gathering at the Palace is always charming, and I shall often recall this scene wherein elegant hospitality and pleasant recreation are so well combined, when to remember will form a favorite pastime."

She looked at me sharply, catching, no doubt, in my voice a more serious meaning than my words of themselves conveyed.

"You speak as if you were on the point of leaving us, monsieur," she said curiously, yet with gracious kindness.

"Yes, madame," I answered, smiling, but of a sudden half regretful too. "You have perhaps already heard that my brother is to depart a fortnight hence to take command at Michilimackinac? I am to go with him."

"The *Sieur de Cadillac* is to succeed the *Sieur de Louvigny*!" exclaimed Madame de Champigny, and

I could see that my information was news to her. "Indeed, it is a well-deserved honor," she continued warmly; "an additional proof of the high esteem in which the Governor holds the ability and resources of the Chevalier de la Mothe. But to set forth in the dead of winter! Why could not Comte Frontenac suffer affairs to remain as they are until the opening of the spring? Does he think his hot impatience will kindle fires along the route for his envoys?"

"Where the welfare of New France is concerned, her officers dally not, nor wait upon a softer season," I responded in a manner of pleasantry, yet with significance.

"True, true," she said, quoting one of our Canadian proverbs, "'A gallant man needs no drum to arouse him;' he braves the snows and storms with the same courage that he faces an army. Since to go you are decided, I trust the elements will be kind to you, Monsieur Normand, and that your sojourn at Michilimackinac may be to your advancement."

Thanking Madame de Champigny for her good wishes, I drew back to make way for others who would fain extend to her their fête-day congratulations.

The intelligence of the appointment of the Sieur Cadillac to the important frontier post of the far west had, I could see, created a sensation in the circle about her, and began to be repeated through the salon.

Now that I had leisure to look around me, my eyes involuntarily sought out Barbe, and I presently descried her as she stood, laughing and radiant, among a mirthful band of young people.

They had been playing "Colin Maillard." Le Moyne of Chateauguay, the whilom "Colin," had

made Barbe captive, and she must needs take his place in the centre of the ring.

She did not see me, for already he held up the scarf wherewith to blind her bright eyes, and I would have liked to thrust him aside as over-bold when he proceeded to bind it about her brow, his awkward fingers lingering over-long, I thought, upon her beautiful hair.

However, luckily, he could not lengthen out the task by more than a second or two. When it was done, I slipped among the rompers as they joined hands anew, and with them circled around the dainty figure in the ring.

Our demoiselle was a charming picture in her robe of gold-colored brocade, cut, as was then the mode in France, with a long pointed waist, round at the neck and with short sleeves; the skirts being tucked up, there was displayed beneath them a coquettish petticoat of pale blue satin embroidered with silver thread; bordering her graceful shoulders was a frill of soft lace, and about her pretty throat was clasped the treasured linked necklace that my uncle Guyon had brought her from across the seas when she was but a child.

These details of her costume I gleaned from her afterwards, — though not without some bantering at my expense.

The white riband that hid her violet eyes showed to good advantage her flower-like English complexion, and contrasted with the sunny glint of her hair, that somehow made me think of the King's golden fleur-de-lis above the white glory of the royal banner.

In truth, she seemed, too, a most picturesque symbol of fate, as she stood there with darkened eyes, smiling, alluring, yet trammelled, too often catching

at nothing, made sport of by the gay world as with merry song it passed before her.

Of a sudden, and so like fate, too, that I must confess I was conscious of a certain uneasiness, after tapping sharply with her Colin's stick three times upon the floor, thus bringing the players to a pause, she advanced a step or two toward me and pointed at me with the staff.

In vain I dodged and made as if to elude it.

"Fair play! fair play!" she called, in warning exultation.

Thereupon I was forced to take hold of the end of the stick, as was the rule of the game.

"Who goes there?" she demanded gayly.

"Your cavalier," I answered, imitating the voice of Le Moyne; and right well, too, I trow, for a ripple of laughter went round, and the handsome demoiselle next to me whispered, "Cleverly done."

Barbe, however, was not deceived. At the sound of my voice she relaxed her hold of the staff, so that between us it fell to the floor.

"Normand!" she exclaimed, tearing the bandage from her eyes and looking up at me archly, — in sooth, a very charming picture of blushing confusion and surprise, — "Normand! Why, how you frightened me! And no wonder, sir," she went on, summoning a mischievous sprightliness to hide her discomfiture, "no wonder. Who ever thought to behold Sir Gravity playing at Colin Maillard, or to see him made captive by Folly?"

And thereat she made me a deep curtsy.

The jest was against me, but I said, with the best grace I could muster, —

"Eh bien, mademoiselle, since I have played the fool for your sake, I claim a reward; will you not

take a turn or two with me about the room? These games are so vastly heating — ”

“What is seldom is wonderful, and, since monsieur has condescended to our frivolity, I will humor his staidness,” she assented, half mockingly.

After I had served my turn as Colin, and made prisoner the vivacious neighbor who had commended my powers of mimicry, I accordingly led Barbe away, not to make the tour of the salon, however, for that had been but a ruse. Instead, I led her to an ottoman set over against one of the doors; and if the position was conspicuous, I was too busy with my own thoughts to notice the fact.

“Will you not sit down here a moment, Barbe, and rest after your romping?” I said. “I have something to tell, and something to ask of you.”

She gave me a roguishly demure yet apprehensive glance, and then obediently sank down upon the velvet cushions.

“Barbe,” I continued abruptly, as I seated myself beside her, “our Sieur is ordered to the command at Fort Michilimackinac, and I am to go with him.”

How incomprehensible are the nerves and emotions of these demoiselles! At this announcement of mine Barbe, who had taken such pains to show me that my presence or absence was a matter of no moment to her, gave a little cry, lost color, and leaned back against the wall; truly, I thought she was going off in a faint.

Her exclamation attracted the attention of several officers who stood chatting near by, among them the same young Le Moyne, and Sabrevois, who was still a ladies’ cavalier.

“Is mademoiselle ill?” inquired the latter, springing to her side.

"The heat of the room, perchance," ventured Le Moyne.

"May I bring a cup of water? or if mademoiselle would but touch with her lips a glass of red wine, I prophesy it would revive her," urged Sabrevois, while I remained staring at her, too astonished to have my wits about me.

"Thanks, messieurs, I am not ill. At least, so crowded is the room that some one in passing trod upon my foot, and without thinking, I cried out. 'T was childish of me, I admit," she faltered.

Glancing down at the little high-heeled slippers of yellow satin which peeped from beneath her gown, Le Moyne said gallantly, —

"Ah, mademoiselle, fairy feet are too often invisible. The poor offender is scarce to blame that he did not see them; still offender he is, and did I but know his name, I would challenge him forthwith."

"Then I am glad you do not know it, and no more do I, yet I am beholden to you for your championship," replied Barbe with ready repartee, notwithstanding her recent discomfiture.

The gentlemen turned away with a laugh, and now, apparently quite recovered from her sudden distress, Barbe leaned toward me, saying, —

"See that pleasant corner over there in the shadow of those branches of evergreen wherewith Madame de Champigny has had the salon decorated; let us ensconce ourselves there: thus, uninterrupted, you can tell me what you wish to say."

We crossed the room and took possession of the little recess.

"And are you really glad to go to Michilimackinac, Normand?" Barbe asked with sympathetic interest.

"Yes," I answered; "for although 't is a desolate

post, Monsieur de Cadillac looks upon it in the light of an advancement, and he has promised me that whatever helps his fortunes shall help mine. Moreover, I have grown discontented here; so much has combined to vex me, — even you, Barbe — ”

“What, I!” she began in well-feigned surprise, and then relenting, said, in tones like her old sweet self, “Ah, Normand, I never meant to really vex you!”

Her gentleness encouraged me to say that over which I had felt some misgiving.

“I believe you, dear Barbe, and therefore, since we are to set out this day fortnight, I am going to beg of you — ”

“Yes,” she murmured, as I hesitated.

“I am going to beg of you not to be so gay and pleasure-loving while I am away,” I concluded gravely.

“And wherefore not, sir?” she inquired, drawing back, while all the radiance died out of her face.

Unaccountably, I felt as one upon whom a ray of sunlight has shone for a moment and then has passed beyond him, leaving him alone in the shadow.

“Wherefore?” I blundered on. “Because it is unbecoming that you should coquet first with one and again with another. There is Chateauguay; did you not note the mirth it caused when, in the Colin Mailard, I named him your cavalier? His devotion to you is most marked; ’twere more generous of you, I think, to either marry him or let him alone. Indeed, it is a matter of some comment. You seem in no haste to keep the pledge you made to Governor Frontenac that you would take a husband in Quebec. I fear me, after all, you fancied the English officer.”

"Normand," interrupted the girl, springing to her feet, and to my surprise, I saw that she was angered, although why, I cannot even now imagine, — "Normand! Enough of this! If you have only fault to find with me, I would thank you to tell Robert de Reaume that I am ready to go home, since I came hither under his escort; and the next time you have news of family interest, — I mean like this contemplated departure of *Sieur Cadillac*, which is of such moment to *Thérèse*, and so to all of us, — the next time you have intelligence of this kind to communicate to any one, let me advise you to choose some other occasion than a social gathering. As for your counsel in regard to my behavior, sir, you have no right to take me to task, nor are you ever like to have. Therefore do not, I pray, harass your thoughts over my conduct, nor my settlement in life, since neither concerns you. There is Robert now. I will speak to him myself."

"My faith, *Mademoiselle Barbe*, I did not mean to put you out of humor," I called testily, as she started away. But ere I had finished the sentence, she was gone to seek her fur mantle and hood preparatory to the walk home in the starlight with *De Reaume*, in company with a merry party of young people whose way lay up the hill to the *Place d'Armes*, where stood the new house of my uncle *Guyon*, on the opposite side from the Castle.

Thus we parted, and this was the last I saw of pretty *Barbe* for many a day. When the time of our setting out for *Michilimackinac* came, the tantalizing maid was absent, having gone to a seignury on the *St. Lawrence* to visit her friend *Madeleine de Verchères*, — the same beautiful *Mademoiselle Madeleine* who, the year before, with such determined cour-

age and clever feminine ingenuity defended the fort against an attack of the Iroquois, and kept the enemy at bay until the arrival of the soldiers sent for the protection of Verchères by Monsieur de Callières, Governor of Montreal.

Our departure was hastened by several days, to be sure, and it may be Barbe intended to return ere the date first fixed upon. Nevertheless, I was forced to leave Quebec without a chance to speak any further words of adieu to her, and much offended was I that she took my going with so ostentatious a show of indifference.

It was necessary that our Sieur should hasten his expedition, in order that his energy might prevent the English from entering the country of the Lake Indians.

I will not dwell upon the intrepidity wherewith, in the depth of winter, our gay Gascon, the Chevalier de Cadillac, led his small party of militia, *coureurs de bois*, and *voyageurs* three hundred leagues across the frozen wastes to the Strait of Michilimackinac, which in those days commanded the great fur trade of the Northwest.

The feat has been set down as one of the most remarkable in the annals of New France, and many times since have I marvelled that we lived to reach the dreary and isolated post where we were fated to remain for some time.

As a description of this place I will transcribe a letter which I writ at our Sieur's dictation soon after our arrival.

"This village" (he bade me set down) "is one of the largest in all Canada. There is a fine fort of pickets and sixty houses that form a street in a straight line along the Lake of the Hurons. There

is a garrison of well-disciplined soldiers, two hundred of the best formed and most athletic men to be found in the New World, besides other persons who reside here during a part of the year. Fish and smoked meat constitute the principal food of the inhabitants. The villages of the savages, wherein are six or seven thousand souls, are distant about a pistol-shot from ours; the lands are clear for about three leagues, and produce sufficient Indian corn for the use of both the French and the savages. Michilimackinac is very advantageously situated, for the Iroquois dare not venture in their sorry canoes to cross the Strait of the Illenese Lake, which is two leagues over, while that of the Lake of the Hurons is too rough for such frail craft. Neither can they approach us unperceived by land because of the fens and marshes. Within the enclosure of the fort are the chapel and the dwelling of the missionary, who has an onerous charge in the spiritual care, not only of the aborigines, but of the scarcely less tractable white men of the post."

The Indians were allied with all the tribes of the Lakes. Among them we found two powerful chiefs, the Rat and the Baron. Our *Sieur* soon discovered that the Baron was receiving peace belts from New York, and the people of Orange had agreed to build a trading-house upon the Lake of the Eries, better known to our *coureurs de bois* as the Lake of the Cats, from the number of wildcats or panthers that infest the region.

These messages and peace belts had been sent hither secretly, the Indian envoys being brought in under the guise of prisoners taken from the Hurons.

Would that I could shut out from my memory a certain day when seven Iroquois were thus brought

to the beach. As they landed, some of our men suspecting treachery and determined to be forehanded, attacked and killed two of them.

A tumult followed, the Indians of the place defending the others until, finding themselves like to be worsted, they gave up one of the pretended prisoners, and our soldiers and traders, mad with rage at their deceit, invited our Hurons and Outawas to "drink the broth of an Iroquois."

For not having prevented these cannibal doings, our *Sieur* has since been much blamed, but I know of two other instances where similar means were availed of to strike terror to the hearts of the savages. At all events the Iroquois came no more to Michilimackinac as emissaries of our southern foes.

Meantime Madame Cadillac was not neglectful of our comfort. Early in the first summer of our stay at the fort, she sent us a large quantity of goods and provisions by a band of voyageurs from *Ville Marie*, in charge of Jean Dionne, and at the same time she writ that she had agreed to pay him for a year's service the sum of 300 livres, together with an Indian blanket, four shirts, two greatcoats, and a gun.

Again, in September of the same year, she sent us supplies through the merchant François Hazeur, to the amount of 2291 livres, 6 sols, and 4 deniers, — for which payment was made a twelvemonth afterwards, when our voyageurs reached Montreal with their peltries.

Indeed, she ever took advantage of the open season to provision us for the winter; my good sister was become an excellent woman of business.

Sometimes, among the delicacies which we found in the boxes that came direct from Quebec, — the

compotes of cherries and pears and apples, the richly spiced cakes, stuffed Spanish citron and raisins, the meats of nuts candied in sugar from the maple-trees, — frequently in the tastiness of these pleasant reminders of old-time fêtes I thought I recognized the skill of Barbe, who had ever a deft hand in the preparation of such confits.

It was not until long afterwards, however, that I learned I had surmised aright, for during all my stay in the wilds I had no word from our English demoiselle.

CHAPTER TENTH

FIRE-WATER

OFTEN, as in Cadillac's house at the fort, I sat at my rude table casting up accounts or copying letters to be sent to Governor Frontenac or to the King's Ministers in France, — often, indeed, at such times would the piquant face of pretty Barbe seem to peer between me and the paper I wrote upon.

Yet, when I sent missives home, I made no inquiries concerning her, of my sister or any one else. I was still hurt that she had not returned from Verchères in season to bid me adieu and to wish me good fortune upon my coming away into the wilderness.

One winter's evening *Sieur Cadillac* sat before the hearthstone of his home within the palisade smoking a pipe of tobacco, or Indian weed, — the pipe itself being of a curious pattern; the bowl of red clay decorated by bands and ornaments of lead; the stem long, quaintly carved, and ornamented with gayly colored feathers of birds, — a gift from a friendly chief.

The room was lighted only by the great fire of forest pine, and opposite to my brother I was ensconced in a chair like his own, — a section of a round log to which had been fastened, to serve as a back, a rude slab of bark.

Oddly would this furniture have contrasted with the elegance of the upholstery of the salon of Ma-

dame de Champigny, the carved chairs of the Castle audience hall, the graceful ottomans and tabourets of my uncle Guyon's new house, — all of which costly luxuries had been brought from France at great expense.

Without raged a storm of sleet. Back of the fort with its wooden bastions and strong palisade of cedar pickets, for leagues, extended the trackless snows and primeval forests; in front lay the beach, at other seasons a long stretch of yellow sand, and the broad expanse of the Lake of the Illenese, which I believe is now known as Lake Michigannig. In many places stiff and shaggy fir-trees fringed the shore with an aspect of desolation; in others they rose in a wall of woods from the water's edge. On clear days we could see, set like a jewel in the gleaming argent of the strait, the enchanted Island of Mackinac, the reputed dwelling-place of the great Indian Spirit, — an island that with its white cliffs, green foliage, and rainbow lights often recalled to my mind a splendid opal I once noticed in the gem-encrusted hilt of a sword much cherished by Comte Frontenac.

On this evening whereof I write, La Mothe and I were talking of many things, — the probable yield of furs for the season, the chances of the future, the disposition of Governor Frontenac in regard to certain measures which my brother had recommended, the state of our provisions. We chatted too of Thérèse and of home, in brotherly confidence and sympathy, — Cadillac smoking his pipe; I, who could not abide the Indian weed, making no pretence of occupation, but gazing idly into the cheerful blaze.

The wind whistled and moaned, and the sleet drove against the sides of the cabin.

All at once, above the noise of the storm I heard

the sound of a step near by, and the next moment there came a sharp knock at the door.

Starting up, I threw it open.

In the doorway, with the darkness for a background, stood a black-robed, ascetic figure; a fur cape was thrown carelessly about his slightly stooped shoulders, and over his head was drawn a capouch of beaver skin, beneath which showed a few thin locks of hair that bristled with sleet, as did also the beard that grew about his throat, the upper part of the face being close shaven. It was Father Estienne de Carheil, who had come across the square of the fort, from his little dwelling beside the church.

Cadillac looked up in surprise. He and the missionary were not on such cordial terms as might lead him to expect a social visit from the good father upon such a night as this. In fact, there was much friction between them, and long before, I had noticed that they seemed to have agreed to hold as little intercourse as might be, while preserving each toward the other a punctilious if distant courtesy.

On this occasion, however, my brother's courtly manners appeared to have deserted him. Stretched out at ease before the glowing pine logs, he did not rise, but indolently motioned his unlooked-for guest to the place I had vacated, as though, foreknowing that his visitor's errand was an unpleasant one, he would waste no time in polite amenities.

Father Estienne was not in the least disconcerted by this rudeness, yet that he felt it I, whose gaze was upon him, could see by the flash that leaped into his usually mild eyes. It was gone as quickly, and with a dignified bow he stepped farther into the room.

I made fast the door, and hastened to possess my-

self of his cloak with its hood and to put the pelt before the fire, for even in the short distance he had traversed it was broidered with ice.

Instead of taking the place to which my brother had waved him, he said urbanely, if with a possible touch of irony, —

“Thanks for your courtesy, Monsieur de Cadillac, but I will not tarry to sit down by your hearth.”

“Verily, I have seen evenings more favorable for friendly visiting, albeit, ’t is said, those who love us think not of wind nor weather when they have an opportunity to aid our plans or advance our interests,” answered La Mothe, after his sarcastic fashion.

“I have the will to do you a service, if you choose but to look upon it in that light,” proceeded the priest, with calmness, “although my business is no agreeable affair. In short, Monsieur le Commandant, I am come to tell you of the scene which a few moments since greeted my eyes.”

As the missionary stood beside our rough table, he made an imposing picture, despite his lean face, the attenuation of frame caused by his long fasts, and vigils, and disciplinings, by the hardships of his frequent journeys to isolated settlements of Indians, where he had established his missions.

His clear-cut features and high-bred mien told of good lineage; above all, there was about him an air of the gentle authority which depends neither upon worldly patronage nor influence, but is commissioned by Heaven itself; and now, as at other times, when I looked at him I felt that Father Estienne was as the voice of God calling to man in the wilderness.

“Monsieur de Cadillac,” continued the missionary, fixing the eye of our Sieur by the sternness of his own, “more than a score of years ago, when this place

where we now live was but a desolate extent of shore that knew not the foot of the white man, on the opposite side of the strait a devoted missionary gathered together the remnant of the Huron nation including, among their many tribes, the Outawas. Here he raised a chapel of cedar boughs, and around this forest sanctuary, his poor dwelling, and their own lodges the Indians built a palisaded fort which soon became known as St. Ignace of the Michilimackinacs.

"The cold was intense and cultivation difficult, but the Hurons had chosen this site because the neighboring waters teemed with fish, and the missionary heeded not its disadvantages, since from this situation it was easy to gain access to all the tribes of the Lake Country.

"Here he lived and taught them. After a time this good man was called to seek in the Lands of the Great River new nations to instruct. He was succeeded here by others who imitated his self-sacrificing toil. The Indians were most exemplary; the settlement flourished; traders from Ville Marie and Quebec came to the mission. Hither the red men of all the Lake Country brought the skins of the otter and beavers they had trapped during the long winter, to barter them for blankets and the goods of the French; Michilimackinac became the great centre of the fur trade, the key to all the west. A military post was established upon the eastern shore of the strait.

"In my work on the missions I was sent hither.

"Then you came, Monsieur de Cadillac. It has pleased you to encourage a trade most disastrous in this region; to bring from Montreal the strong waters that steal tongue and brains and render useless the hands of men.

"Formerly, when the Indians returned from the chase, the fisheries, their long trapping expeditions, they repaired first to the church, there to render thanks to Heaven for the success of their enterprises. Now, look you, to-day a large band of Outawas came in with all haste to outrun the approaching storm. You beheld the goodly showing they made with their peltries, their joy at getting back to the protection of the fort.

"And what next, Monsieur de Cadillac? The trader Le Maire takes a cask of brandy into their village; he proposes a game of bowl, the stakes to be drams of liquor against their furs. The Indians pile high the peltries before him; the play begins; the air rings with wild cries and guttural laughter, as to and fro are tossed the small, gayly colored pieces of bone.

"All this takes place in the lodge of the Rat, their principal chief. Jules wins and wins. Finally, all the furs have been gambled away; poor as when they went out into the woods at the beginning of the winter, the Indians reel from the lodge or sink down upon the floor. Now they lie in their wigwams in a drunken stupor. Monsieur de Cadillac, what have you to say to this?"

During this fervid protest La Mothe had straightened himself in his chair, and several times made as if he would interrupt the Black Robe in no measured terms. Now, however, he leaned back once more, and, taking his pipe from between his lips, answered with a shrug of the shoulders, and as if half addressing the fire, —

"What have I to say? My faith, Monsieur de Carheil, only that, owing to the merciless cold and the absence of proper food in this locality, I deem it necessary that the strength of those upon whose la-

bors the prosperity of the settlement largely depends should be fortified by a small measure of brandy, as often as it can be furnished them. A little eau de vie would keep the Outawa trappers from contracting illness. If the dogs of Indians drank to excess, surely I am not to blame."

"Monsieur le Commandant, I make no comment upon your theory so far as it concerns the officers and soldiers of the garrison under your command, or their supposed needs as not being acclimated to this latitude. For myself, I never touch spirits, believing example to be more potent than precept with savages as with civilized peoples," returned the missionary. "And, at least, the drink which the aborigines so aptly name 'Fire Water' is not necessary for them. Our Lake Indians, their fathers before them, their grandsires back to their remote ancestors, have endured the rigors of this climate, the exposure of extended trapping expeditions, have broken the ice of the strait to spear fish for food, and yet have managed to exist without the eau de vie wherewith you have taken such trouble to provide them."

Cadillac broke into a short laugh.

"If you undertake to civilize the Indians, you cannot keep them from the vices of civilization, any more than you can keep the young, as they grow older, from a knowledge of the world, Monsieur le Curé. The Hurons and Outawas had tasted fire water ere I came among them."

"Now and again, perhaps, thanks to the cupidity of some commandants and traders, but never as you have supplied it."

"Oh, well, well," continued De la Mothe, with a sneer, "what is past, is past. If the Indians were

unable to get strong spirits from us, they would go for fire water to our enemies. Since you are so grieved, my dear Monsieur Estienne, that they occasionally succumb to the seductions of our good brandy of New France, bethink you what would be your sorrow to see your zealous neophytes seek the encampments of our foes, not only to drink deep of English rum, but to imbibe freely of heresy as well?"

"There is no contingency which justifies the doing of even a little wrong, Monsieur de Cadillac," answered Father Estienne, with dignity. "I ask you again, is the work of the founder of this mission and that of the missionaries who came after him, down to this day, — is all this to be undone? Have we opened the way for you here only that you may set in the path of the Indian a temptation he knew not hitherto, that with your accursed strong waters you should debase him beneath the level of the brute creation?"

In a towering rage Cadillac sprang to his feet. "Monsieur de Carheil, I will not brook such speech," he cried hotly. "You allude to the labors here at Michilimackinac of the good Monsieur de Marquette, whose memory is so justly revered by savage and white man. I hold his name in all honor and respect. I regard also the zeal of those who came after him. But, as to this matter, understand me. Your business here is to christianize the red men, to impress upon them the duty of obedience to the Governor of Quebec, and to minister to the spiritual needs of the white dwellers at this post, as best you may. With affairs not within your province I counsel you not to intermeddle. You pay no heed to my request that you should teach the Hurons and

Outawas the French language. I furnish brandy to the Indians because I think best to do so. That is the end of the matter."

Notwithstanding this outburst from the Commandant, Monsieur Estienne retained his self-control, although the flush that dyed his cheek, his compressed lips, and the fire of his deep-set eyes showed that to do so cost him an effort. "Sieur Cadillac, I will not contend with you as to what is or is not within my province," he replied. "You are the Commandant here, and I recognize your civil authority; but as to this being the end of the matter at issue between us, I warn you such is very far from the case. You say I and my confrères are not in haste to teach the Indians the language of France,—it is because we wish to preserve the Children of the Forest from the vices of the settlers. If you would best serve the interests of the government, encourage the red men to follow the lessons we have taught them, and they will be your faithful allies. If you do otherwise,—if, either for the sake of personal gain or commercial enterprise, you continue, as now, ever ready to quench the savage thirst you have aroused with the potion of death, the insidious fire-water,—if you suffer your traders to rob the Indian of his peltries by that unjust pressing down of the scales by which every Frenchman's hand is said to weigh a pound,—if you permit them to tempt him to barter not only his furs but his immortal soul for a dram,—believe me, retribution will come. You may grow rich, Sieur Cadillac,—ay, you *will* grow rich—"

As he spoke, the missionary waxed abstracted, his bent form became erect, his thin face, dried to a complexion like leather from exposure to the elements, took on the rapt, exalted expression I had

seen it wear sometimes when he stood before the altar, while his eyes assumed a fixed, far-away look, as if they gazed into the future.

"Ay," he repeated, in the clear, well-modulated tones which the Indians loved, "you *will* grow rich, *Sieur Cadillac*; many leagues from here you will establish a fine colony; moneys and lands and honors will be yours; but beware, there will come a day when these honors and possessions will pass from you, your friends will turn against you, you will die in poverty, your children will be penniless, no one of your name will remain in the city you will found."

While he uttered these last words, the consecrated hand which the priest had raised in warning dropped to his side, the light of prophecy died out of his eyes, leaving them mild as before; the stern judge and seer was gone, and again we saw the humble missionary.

"*Monsieur le Commandant*, I have said what I came to say," he added quietly.

Forthwith he threw his fur cloak about his shoulders, drew the capouch over his head, and heeding not the explosion of *Cadillac's* wrath nor the invectives which the *Commandant* hurled after him, flung open the door, and passed out again into the darkness and the sleet, leaving as uncomfortable a storm behind him.

For a full quarter-hour *La Mothe* blazed away, and truly I never before knew him for so great a master of opprobrious epithet.

As for me, I saw it was useless to attempt to stay the torrent, the more since his expletives being cast against the walls of the cabin hurt no one, as might not have been the case had I crossed the path of their rebound.

In his excitement he had risen; now he paced the

floor with quick strides. But the fiercest anger, like the wildest tempest, subsides at last; wearied by the force of his passion, Cadillac threw himself down in his chair and took to gloomily studying the fire.

"Normand," he said gruffly, after an interval of oppressive silence, "is the door ajar?"

"No, mon chevalier, it is fastened securely," I answered.

The temperature of the room was summer-like; nevertheless he shuddered.

"Pile on more logs, for the cold must be strengthening," he muttered, and lapsed once more into moodiness.

A disquiet harassed me. I felt it to be the startling insistence of the missionary's prediction which had caused the throbbing fire in my brother's veins to become as ice, — the warning that the crown of his ambition would be snatched away just as he thought to place it upon his brow.

In fact, as I have many times since reflected, never since that night was De la Mothe quite the same as before. Often surrounded by the full splendor of fortune's sunshine, he appeared to me ever on the verge of shadow. The sword which he fancied hung over his head might have a jewelled hilt, but it was a sword of Damocles still.

For myself, from that evening I saw many things with clearer eyes, — would that I could have influenced him to see them thus also! If, as the years went by, my devotion to our Sieur may have lost something of the glamour of its romantic admiration, I loved him dearly to the end, and, I hope, served him faithfully. And although I could not but see his faults and deplore his mistakes, I yet ever found much in his character to esteem and respect.

One evening, shortly after the occurrence which I have just set down, De la Mothe and I were again seated by the fire, he smoking, as was his wont, I meditatively watching the blaze.

After a time Cadillac stirred impatiently and knocked the ashes from his pipe.

"Normand," he exclaimed with abruptness, breaking in upon my reverie, "how did the man know?"

"Who? — what, *mon chevalier*?" I asked with a start, as if suddenly awakened.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he laughed in his debonair manner. "Did I arouse you from a doze? Or were your thoughts perchance dancing attendance upon some fair but hard-hearted demoiselle of Quebec or Montreal? Ah, I see you do not relish the jest," he went on, noting my shrug of annoyance, "and in truth I am in no mood for mirth, my thoughts have been on weightier matters. One thing puzzles me. How came the man to be so familiar with my dreams, my ambitions?"

As he spoke, he pointed with his thumb in the direction of the church and the missionary's cabin.

"You mean Monsieur de Carheil?"

Cadillac nodded.

"'Tis not like that he learned from me of any plan of yours," I answered, as my brother continued to regard me, I fancied, with a certain reproach. "Even had I the will to betray your confidence, I know not any projects you may have for the future."

"Nor did I tell any one," murmured our Sieur; "yet, wittingly or not, he fathomed the desire of my heart, the design I have had in view for many a day."

"It was but a random shot, a surmise based upon his knowledge of your tireless activity and your re-

sources, as well as the value of your services to the government."

"Perchance. But it is a strange coincidence," he continued. "Listen, Normand! Do not think I meant to doubt you. You have ever been faithful to me, and now I would fain know how the scheme I have in mind would impress a man still young, courageous, and fond of adventure as you are, since I shall have need of followers of this order.

"You know that some ten years ago Monsieur de Lhut, then Commandant at Michilimackinac, erected a fortified trading-post at the southern extremity of our Lake of the Hurons, which he called Fort St. Joseph. You are also aware that it was abandoned two years later, with insufficient reason to my thinking, for the climate proved milder than it is here, while the situation was very favorable, being at the first link, I may say, of that beautiful chain of lake and river which connects the five marvellous Inland Seas, which our intrepid explorers have given to New France, together with the greater part of the vast territory that borders upon them.

"However, well chosen as was the position of Du Lhut's trading-fort, I have in mind a better site. You have heard how, long since, the missionaries Dollier de Casson and Galinée, and after them the gallant Chevalier de la Salle, followed up this connecting chain of waters from Fort Frontenac. They found it as richly set with islands as is a queen's necklace with jewels, and the beautifully verdant shores of the mainland served to complete the picture of a veritable earthly paradise.

"Especially attractive was the region which lies south of the pearl-like lake to which they gave the name of St. Claire, the country bordering upon that

clear, deep river, a quarter league broad, known as Le Détroit.

"I have had from the Indians and the *coureurs de bois* glowing descriptions of this fair locality, and while affecting to treat their accounts with indifference, I made note of all in my mind.

"On both sides of this strait of straits lie fine open plains where the deer roam in graceful herds, where bears (by no means fierce, and exceedingly good to eat) are to be found, as are also the savory 'poules d'Indes,' wild duck, and other varieties of game. The islands are covered with trees; chestnuts, walnuts, apples, and plums abound, and in the season the wild vines are heavy with grapes, of which the forest rangers say they have made a wine that, considering its newness, was not at all bad.

"What think you, Normand, do not all these excellences make the place a happy choice for a settlement? Stay, ere you answer I will dwell upon far greater considerations.

"The Hurons have a village on Le Détroit; they see, according to their needs, its advantages. Normand, Michilimackinac is an important post, but the climate will ever be against it, the place will never become a great settlement. Le Détroit is the real centre of the Lake Country, the gateway to the west. It is from there we can best hold the English in check."

"And what would you do at Le Détroit?" I asked, still only half recovered from my surprise.

"I would make it a permanent post, not subject to changes, as are so many of the others," he replied, his enthusiasm kindling. "To do this, it is but necessary to have a good number of the French, soldiers

and traders, and to draw around it the tribes of friendly Indians, in order to conquer the Iroquois, who from the beginning have harassed us and prevented the advance of civilization. The French live too far apart; we must bring them together, that when necessary they may be able to oppose a large force to the savages and thus defeat them."

"Yes, to be sure," I made answer, "if Le Détroit were well fortified, we could prevent the Iroquois from following the chase thereabouts, and thus drive them away from this upper country also."

"I see that you take my meaning," said Cadillac, approvingly. "Moreover, look you, the waters of the Great Lakes pass through this strait, and it is the only path whereby the English can carry on their trade with the savage nations who have to do with the French. If we establish ourselves at Le Détroit, they can no longer hope to deprive us of the benefits of the fur trade."

"But how will you prevent the savages from going to the southrons, since they can get more for their peltries from them than from us?" I argued.

"Now, Normand," cried La Mothe, with impatience, "do you not know that at Quebec and Montreal, although the Indian can exchange goods at a lower price with our enemies, he prefers to make his trade with us. This is partly, no doubt, because he is neighbor to the Frenchman, and frequently borrows from him, paying in returns from the chase. Then, too, the English are farther away. Still, I admit, if the post at Le Détroit is not founded we shall soon see all of our Indians going to our competitors, or inviting them into the Indian country. Once there, however, we would divert the trade of that southern region to our own colony."

"The post appears an absolute necessity," I said. "What measures will you take now, *mon chevalier*?"

"Having considered it well in my mind, I am about to write to Governor Frontenac to lay the plan before him. I shall request him to recall me to Quebec, that I may explain everything to him in detail. I shall need your help to take down notes of what I wish to say, and also to make copies of the missive and other documents when they are finished. It is for this reason I have spoken to you somewhat freely on the subject. Get pens and paper, and we will set about our letter-writing to-night."

CHAPTER ELEVENTH

A GREAT SURPRISE

IT was with a light heart that I undertook this work, and cheerfully toiled with my quill all the next day as well, until the letter and papers connected therewith were completed. After they were despatched by a trusted *côureur de bois*, how long seemed the time ere the answer could reach us!

At length, however, the messenger returned. Comte Frontenac graciously consented to relieve De la Mothe from his duties at the post, and stated that he had already despatched the Baron Alphonse de Tonty to succeed him.

Verily, I could not but laugh when I thought of Monsieur de Tonty's suave Italian manners wasted upon the roughness of this isolated settlement.

With him came Lieutenant Sabrevois, who, still a bachelor, perchance because of his early fancy for Thérèse, had nevertheless been much attracted to little Barbe ere I came away, and had, in truth, made application to my uncle Guyon as a suitor for her hand.

One morning, shortly after the arrival of the new Commandant, I brought to him the books of the post, the which he asked me forthwith to explain to Monsieur de Sabrevois. Ere we began our task, I felt it incumbent upon my courtesy to express to the lieutenant my felicitations at his promotion.

Whether the honor conferred upon him by the Governor had turned his head, or because he had some grudge against me, I do not know, but he received my civilities very ill.

"Thanks, Monsieur Guyon," he answered with a supercilious haughtiness which would have been laughable had it not so nettled me. "The appointment may seem a great advancement to the eyes of a young man like you, one who is unknown and has his way to make; but it is scarce to be reckoned a gain by a cavalier of position who has seen much of life and manners. Of a truth I found it not to my liking."

The arrogant air of the braggart as he stood smiling before me, and the taunt conveyed in his speech caused my anger to leap forth as does a flame from a covered and smouldering fire.

"Tée! I understand and might have expected as much from your great valor, Monsieur le Lieutenant," I made answer.

"Monsieur, you flatter me," he said with an ironical bow.

"Nevertheless, to be an officer in Quebec and a soldier in the Northwest are rôles that sometimes require different qualifications, monsieur. To dine at the Château is one thing, to face a horde of hostile savages is quite another matter," I continued in the vein of sarcasm I had picked up from my close association with our Sieur, who was "to the manner born," as the English say.

Sabrevois' sword flashed forth therewith.

"Monsieur, take back your words, or I will make you eat them," he cried.

"Monsieur, you can best stomach them," I rejoined, whipping out my own rapier.

Our weapons met with a clash, and the next moment we were fighting as those fight between whom there is a bitter feud.

We were of about the same weight, but Sabrevois still maintained his reputation as one of the best blades of his regiment. No doubt he thought me an antagonist unworthy of his skill, yet therein he was mistaken. Having practised much with our *Sieur*, I had acquired a facility in fence; in fact, so well pleased was my brother with his pupil that he was wont to say he would match me against any swordsman in New France.

Soon the lieutenant discovered how greatly he had underrated my dexterity, even though he tried my steel most cleverly. The advantage lay first with one, then with the other; but ere many seconds he began to turn and thus lost ground. I gained by this and pressed him near to the wall; he forced his way out; I drove him back. We circled round; he grew hot, more angered, and short of breath. I kept my head, and my coolness served me well. Once he nearly pricked me; but I parried the thrust, and presently lunging, touched his breast.

"It is enough, monsieur," I said, as he sprang backward, for I had no mind to seriously wound him; "your honor and my humor are satisfied."

"Nay, 't is but a scratch," he cried, enraged, and we closed once more.

Now, however, there occurred an interruption upon which we had neither of us reckoned. A third rapier smote between our blades, striking them up so sharply that Sabrevois' flew from his grasp, while I, turning quickly to meet a new adversary, beheld the saturnine countenance of De Tonty scowling upon me.

"Hold, I pray you, gentlemen," he said severely.

"A sorry example it is to the savages to see the new Commandant's first lieutenant crossing swords with the secretary of Monsieur de Cadillac."

As he spoke, he pointed to the windows through which peered the leering faces of some six or eight dusky warriors.

With dignity I sheathed my weapon, while the lieutenant regained his.

"Perhaps now Monsieur Guyon will hear me out upon the subject of our difference," he began lightly. "Know then, monsieur, only the call of duty could have induced me to leave Quebec, for I have been but recently married to the most charming demoiselle of New France."

Much to my own discomfiture and surprise, for a moment my heart seemed to cease beating; then the blood rushed to my face. Our *coureur de bois* had spent his leisure at the wine-shops or about his own affairs, and brought us no news from home beyond a hasty screed from Thérèse to Cadillac, a few lines taken up with expressions of happiness at the hope of soon seeing him. One bit of information he had, however, obtained. "Mademoiselle Barbe Guyon was away," he said. "Mayhap she was at Verchères, or it may be up at Montreal. He had heard she was about to be married, or perhaps she was already married, he could not remember."

Was it possible that she had married Sabrevois? Yet why not? Although getting on to middle age, was he not regarded as one of the best "parti" in Quebec, a man of excellent lineage and some fortune? What mattered it that with me, no more than with Cadillac, he had never chimed? Is it not well for most of us that a woman does not see a man's character as his fellows see it? If there is good in him,

she finds and fosters it with her love, God bless her, and causes it to shine forth at last, while the evil she holds in check, and weeps over in secret, and in part atones for by her wifely prayers. So Barbe had married Sabrevois; and a moment since I was like to have given him a wound that would have gone hard with him.

"In sooth, monsieur, you are slow to offer your congratulations," he proceeded.

"Monsieur Sabrevois," I replied, with an effort mastering my choler, "pardon my hesitation, but since you have not acquainted me with the name of the fair demoiselle upon whom you have conferred the honor of your alliance, I know not if *you* are to be congratulated; whereas, knowing you—" I paused significantly.

"Ho, ho, ho," he laughed in derisive triumph. "You are severe, but I forgive the jest, since we may not now fight out our quarrel. Another day—"

"Monsieur, I am waiting to hear the name of your bride, and I pray she may not be made a widow over soon," I responded, striving to speak quietly.

He gave me a quick look, and finding it better policy to provoke me no further, said, —

"Thanks for your interest, monsieur. It affords me pleasure to inform you that a few weeks since I was married at Boucherville to your cousin Mademoiselle Jeanne Boucher. Mademoiselle Guyon was at the wedding."

And now, indeed, I could almost have killed him for the mocking mirth with which he greeted my chagrin. Had he run me through with his sword, I could not have felt more thoroughly defeated. But at least I had the wisdom to see the folly of my irritability, — I who had been trained in the gentle spirit of

St. Francis. So making my compliments to the lieutenant upon his recent nuptials with the best grace I could muster, and saying to Monsieur de Tonty that, having delivered to him the books of accounts, I must beg to consider myself quit of all responsibility regarding them, I strode from the cabin.

Later, however, it seemed to me that mayhap, after all, I came not so badly out of the affair with Sabrevois. He had chosen to make sport of my cousinly regard for a certain demoiselle, but perchance 'twas done to ease an old hurt to his pride which on occasion galled him, since 'twas Mademoiselle Barbe Guyon whom he would have married had he been so fortunate as to win her.

Soon after, with our Sieur I left Michilimackinac. Ah, how good it was to get back to the weather-beaten crag of Quebec once more!

It is true, there grief awaited me. My father, Denys Guyon, had died during our stay at the Fort of the Upper Lakes, and now every spot which had been associated with him seemed haunted by his dear familiar presence.

But if many things were changed, I still found much to cheer me at home. My sweet sister, Madame Cadillac, was kind and affectionate as ever; my uncle Guyon as bluff and hearty; and Barbe? Well, when a man has lived more than three years amid the solitudes of Nature, shut in by the snows and ice during the winter and the leafage of the primeval forests in summer, he is not prone to cavil at a woman's rippling laughter, or to murmur because she makes lighter the hearts of those about her by her merry badinage.

Although she coquetted with her cavaliers much after her old fashion, there was oftener to be remarked in her that air of sweet dignity whereof I had seen

glimpses in her early girlhood. Our dear Barbe was no longer but a piquant maiden, like our garden flowers growing taller day by day; she had become a graceful, gracious, and most lovely woman.

Indeed, my aunt Guyon confided to me that in the wedding-chest which she had for years been preparing against the marriage day of this daughter of her heart, there were now stored away full twenty spoons of silver, each spoon denoting a year of the age of our pretty demoiselle, as near as it could be reckoned.

That mademoiselle would have been annoyed at the fond mother's loquacity, I feel sure; but I betrayed not the good dame's confidence, while making a mental note of the same.

Barbe often tantalized me still. She listened with more respect to what I had to say, however, and remembering that she had managed very well in regard to Sabrevois, I forbore to take her to task on the subject of her lovers; so there was less friction between us than formerly.

Our illustrious Comte Frontenac was now in his last days, and everywhere I saw old differences forgotten, in the attachment manifested for the fiery and lion-hearted soldier, by the people of all ranks, from the Bishop down to the poorest orphan whom he had befriended.

But if a glorious sun was setting, the star of our Sieur was mounting higher in the skies of New France. One afternoon he came home from the Castle in high spirits.

"Normand," he said, "that great man yonder, who remains undaunted even at the approach of the King of Terrors, Frontenac, has entered into my plan of a settlement upon Le Détroit with a gleam of his whilom ardor. He bids me go to France, and lay the

project before Comte Pontchartrain, before the Sun King himself. The next ship sails in two days. We will sail with her. I say we, because many times I have promised to take you with me to the mother country; now I will keep my word. Make your preparations, then, without delay."

At these words of his, my heart gave a bound; but quickly my joy was succeeded by a strange sense of mental depression.

From the day when I first took service with "mon chevalier," it had been my dream to accompany him to the Old World. Yet how contrary is our nature! Now that the wish I had cherished for years was granted to me, I would willingly have foregone it.

Never had I been so content in Quebec, nor found its social life more agreeable. Since my coming from the wilderness, as in the days long passed, I was not altogether averse to the society of the vivacious demoiselles who visited at our house, and Barbe bantered me much upon my interest in her friends, especially anent the beautiful Madeleine de Verchères, my admiration for whom it required no rare discernment to discover.

However I said nothing to La Mothe of my new and extraordinary reluctance to fare forth with him. And if I bitterly repented this reticence ere long, yet had I, on account of the beautiful Madeleine, for instance, given up the opportunity to go across the seas, perchance I should have been sorry in the end.

For if a man abandons a just aim or ambition, even for the sake of the woman he loves, the sacrifice leaves behind it a regret that will grow keener as the years slip by; and for it, in his thoughts at least, he will ever reproach her.

So I went with our *Sieur Cadillac* to France, and saw the fair land of Normandy, where my grandsire was born, and the city of Paris, which his Majesty King Louis the Fourteenth has so greatly beautified by forming squares and gardens, and erecting fine churches and triumphal arches, so that it is become the most splendid capital of the world.

With my brother, too, I had a glimpse of the Court of Versailles. Verily, the splendors of the New Palace so dazzled my eyes, that I have never since recovered from the glamour of it all, albeit this is not surprising, since its gorgeousness surpasses anything Europe has hitherto known.

And I saw the King, ay, his August Majesty, as he passed down the already famed Hall of Mirrors to the *Salon du Conseil*, where he was wont to confer with his ministers.

In truth, so surrounded was he by courtiers, and so overcome was I by embarrassment at finding myself in the vicinity of so much majesty, that (in my confidences to these pages, I will set down) I cannot form a well-defined picture of his features in my mind, often as I have described him to others. This much I observed, however: his countenance is handsome, and his manner grave and commanding. It is said he has the art, by his dress and carriage, to appear taller than he is of fact.

Be this as it may, he of a certainty seemed to tower above those about him, and his air was most imposing.

As for the *Comte de Pontchartrain*, I was present at *La Mothe's* conferences with him; and since I aided in the preparation of the documents relative to the establishment of the fort on *Le Détroit*, I have reason to believe that the lines which my obscure

hand penned with such care were read also by his Royal Master.

These honors I had, and all this magnificence I saw, and I have never tired of recounting the experiences of my visit, although on other topics I am considered a silent man. But who is there that would not wish to hear of the wonders of the mother country, of Versailles, and of the gracious aspect of his glorious Majesty, who is so often named, from the splendor of his court and of his reign, the Sun King?

Spring came, the King's new Gardens of the Élysées in Paris had taken on a tint of emerald; in the royal park and the groves about the town of Versailles the trees flaunted their fresh robes of delicate green. How I wished his Majesty and all the Court might see our forests of New France, in their tardy but enchanting springtime beauty!

The softness of the air, the song of the birds, turned my thoughts from the brilliant scenes amid which I strayed. More than once I caught myself wondering how near to blowing were the anemones of the woods about Beauport, and who among Barbe's cavaliers would bring to her the first spray of the arbutus she had always loved.

It was just at this time, when all the world seemed most fair, that I received intelligence which awoke me to an understanding of my own heart.

How often does news travel far and wide ere it reaches those most concerned! Thus it happened that a report from Quebec came to me by way of the isolated west, having been carried to and fro across the Canadian plains, as I have seen the ball bandied in the Indian game of la crosse.

Monsieur de Tonty had occasion to write to our

Sieur from Michilimackinac. When enclosing the missive, Sabrevois had scrawled upon a slip of paper a few words asking information of me upon some clerkly matter. As if prompted by an afterthought, he added, —

“I dare say, Monsieur Guyon, in watching the grandeurs of Versailles, you take small count of the news which comes from Quebec, that the pretty coquette, Mademoiselle Barbe Guyon, has given preference above all her suitors to the gallant young Le Moyne, having been married to him at the cathedral some weeks since. But what matters it, monsieur? There are other charming women in New France, as I discovered duly; and perhaps you will not now wish to run me through with your rapier for saying as much.”

How long I remained seated at my writing-table in the apartment where we lodged, staring blankly at the letter, I cannot tell. All I know is that after a time Cadillac came in and found me thus.

“What is it, Normand?” he asked. “Why, what ails you, man?” and he clapped me on the shoulder roughly, yet with kind intent to recall me from the daze wherein I was lost.

“Have you been wounded in an encounter?” he persisted, giving a rapid glance around the room, as if on the alert for a concealed enemy.

“No, no! It is nothing,” I replied, arousing myself, “a mere prick in the side that I got at fence.”

“Sacré! You have measured your skill against the art of De Liancour, and with rapiers instead of foils, as I live!” exclaimed he. “I am proud of your boldness, — or rashness, as others would name it, — my brother. I am willing to believe your hurt is not serious, although you must see a sur-

geon. De Liancour is a brave gentleman and would not stoop to any foul trick. So adroit is he that, in a duel where he meant not to slay, he has been known to leave between his blade and a man's heart but the thickness of a sheet of paper. I marvel not he pricked you as a punishment for your temerity. To think of an unknown youth from New France crossing blades with the best swordsman in Paris!"

I smiled grimly to myself. I had indeed fenced with the *Sieur de Liancour*; but although he pressed me hard, with a view to leaving me a scratch as a souvenir of the encounter, I had come off skin whole.

Nevertheless I let the matter go at this, and Cadillac took up the packet of papers whereof he had broken the seal before he went out.

"Oh, by the way, an item of home news comes to us in roundabout fashion," I said carelessly.

When he had read *Sabrevois'* scrawl, he broke into a laugh, crying, —

"By Heaven, it is but a rumor, batted about by the wind. Otherwise we should have had letters apprising us of the betrothal."

"Perchance they are on the way; this billet names the bridegroom, and mentions that the marriage took place in the Bishop's church, and not at *Beauport*," I rejoined quietly.

"Eh bien, Normand, you at least never paid court to our English demoiselle," he went on. "My faith! one day she may reign in the *Château St. Louis* as the grandest Lady of New France. I marvel not you disapproved the suit of *Sabrevois*."

"Barbe is no more like to be Lady of the Castle than is my sister *Thérèse*," I broke out.

Brusque as was my answer, it pleased *La Mothe*.

"Chut, you are a loyal fellow," he said with his rare smile. "But, in faith, it is a noble alliance. Chateauguay has graces of person and manner that would win the heart of any woman. I am glad Mademoiselle Barbe has shown a proper ambition, too, in her choice of a husband. For ambition is the true lodestone of life. Look at me, Normand; I have drawn a prize in the lottery of love; yet, pardieu, Adam grew weary in paradise, once he learned there were other spheres beyond, while Eve would have drawn down the stars of heaven to make for herself a jewelled diadem. A good marriage, yes! I trust others of our family will do as well; and while we are on the subject, my brother, I must congratulate you upon the favor you have found with a certain fair demoiselle at home. There is no finer seigneurie on the St. Lawrence than that of Verchères, no name in the annals of New France that offers a prouder connection."

"I will never wed a woman for her lands," I said hotly. "With all your worldly wisdom, La Mothe, I scarce think you considered the dower of Thérèse when you came wooing to Beauport."

"Of a verity, I gave it not a thought," he returned, with a laugh at the overthrow of his own arguments. "But, well a-day, there is only one Thérèse in the world. Nay, do not contradict me; I am willing to yield that there is also only one Madeleine."

The next packet of letters from Quebec put the truth of the report we had heard beyond a doubt.

"On the 28th of August," wrote Madame Cadillac, "Barbe, urged on by my aunt Guyon's loving complaint that the maid was growing old, and unless she made haste would be forced to write herself down as 'femme majeure' in the marriage register, —

Barbe, to the surprise of every one, on the 28th was wedded at the cathedral to the noble Henri Le Moyne, son of De Longueil and Sieur de Chateauguay. An excellent match, is it not, since the Sieur has good looks and rich lands, and is in high favor with Monsieur de Callières, the new Governor. Moreover, our demoiselle had given her word to Comte Frontenac to take a husband in Quebec."

In the days that followed, strangely enough, I saw little beauty in Paris or Versailles, nor ever should I have recalled their first charm to me, had not the mist which then hung over my life been since dispelled by the sunshine of a true woman's love.

After a short time, La Mothe announced that his business with Comte Pontchartrain was finished and we might forthwith set out for home. On the last day of May, 1699, we took horse from Paris to Rochelle, and sailed from that port a week later.

Of the voyage westward I remember little. The seas were blue and calm, the days clear and sunny, and in the tranquil June evenings the moonlight shining upon the waste of waters made the whole ocean gleam as a mirror of silver.

But all the while a storm raged in my heart, a battle that I was resolved to fight and win; yet, as in the contest at fence with Wernesson de Liancour, to leave no one the wiser of my victory.

In the home welcome I missed the cordial greeting wherewith our English demoiselle had ever met my return, and which now seemed to my recollection wondrous sweet, even if at times I had cavilled at it as too careless, and at others as over-distant.

For of course Barbe was not there, and my sister, Madame Cadillac, was so taken up with joy at the

reunion with her husband, that I could get no speech of her.

At length, an hour or two after our arrival, I said:

"Come, Thérèse, let us walk in the garden. I would fain see how near to ripening are the cherries, and I will describe to you how the flower plots are laid out in the King's Gardens of the Champs Élysées."

Having reached the green enclosure, however, we paced the path between the trees once or twice without speaking.

Then finding me still silent, Thérèse said archly:

"Eh bien, Normand, your stay in France has made you most eloquent and entertaining. Have you lost interest in the cherries so soon? Or do our garden plots so eclipse the royal parterres as to leave you nothing to criticise?"

"Pardieu, Thérèse, you know I did not, of a truth, want you to come out that we might talk either of royalty or cherries," I answered testily.

Madame Cadillac elevated her eyebrows.

"Of what, then?" she inquired in pretended surprise.

"Tell me of Barbe," I cried with some heat. "Why did you not prevent her marriage?"

"Prevent it!" echoed Thérèse, stopping short and staring at me in astonishment. "What has come over you, Normand? It was the best marriage in the Colonies for Barbe, and who could have foreseen how it has turned out?"

"How it has turned out!" I repeated, catching at my blade. "Barbe has, as you say, made a great marriage. Nevertheless, if she still needs a protector, a champion —"

Thérèse smiled and laid a gentle hand upon my arm.

"Bless you, Normand," she said. "Quiet and

reserved of temperament as you are, at times your spirit flares up wellnigh as fierce as Cadillac's own. But concern yourself not so much for Barbe in this brotherly fashion. Isolated as is her home at Chateauguay, already have lovers found the way thither."

"'Sdeath!" I cried, growing cold with rage. "Hold, Thérèse! Tell me that young Le Moyne neglects his bride, if you must,—that Barbe is wronged and unhappy, but say no more. For did any other woman say half so much, of a surety I should strangle her; did a man breathe a syllable of lying scandal against Barbe, he should never live to make his peace with God."

At my wrath, my sister fell to laughing and then to weeping, until I thought her bereft of all sense.

"Normand, Normand," she at last exclaimed between her sobs. "No breath of calumny can touch the Lady of Chateauguay. Barbe is as good as she is fair. But did you not receive the letter I writ you anent this whole sad affair?"

"No missive came from you addressed to me," I responded blankly.

"Then there is indeed much to tell you," she continued. "Listen! Aunt Guyon gave our dear Barbe no peace, but said over and again it was high time she was married. The Sieur de Chateauguay was head over ears in love, and a demoiselle cannot but look kindly, at least, on a man who worships the ground she treads upon. Thus, of a sudden, Barbe consented that the marriage should be arranged, and the ceremony took place without delay."

"So they were married, and thus ends the story," I said with impatience.

"No, it is not the end," she insisted gently; "the marriage was hastened because Le Moyne's regiment

was ordered out in the expedition against the Iroquois. Even on his wedding-day Chateauguay was forced to take leave of his bride, and alas, brave chevalier, — poor Barbe, — he was killed two weeks later while fighting the Indians and the English, even as died two of his older brothers before him."

I stopped short and gazed at Madamè Cadillac in a bewildered horror. For the nonce I forgot myself, so appalled was I by the tragic fate of the noble De Chateauguay.

"Alas, poor Le Moyne!" I said with the same impulse that prompts one to lay a spray of laurel upon the bier of a hero. And in sympathy for her in the ordeal through which she had so recently passed, I added softly, "Poor Barbe!"

Thérèse gave me a sharp, quick glance, and paced beside me silently for a few minutes.

"You say Barbe is at the seigneurie?" I queried at length.

"Yes, she went there to be in solitude. You may go your way to Le Détroit, Normand; she wishes not to see you nor any one. She was but a bride of a few hours, yet never have I seen a more grief-stricken widow. In his death Le Moyne seems to have gained the affection which somehow I scarce believe she gave him living. She talks of consecrating her life to his memory. I should not greatly marvel were she to enter the Convent of the Ursulines; you know —"

"Thérèse, Thérèse! Where are you, *ma mie*?" rang out Cadillac's clear voice from the gallery that looked out upon the garden.

At the call Thérèse hurried away, and I was left to my own thoughts.

Much had I to meditate upon. Small wonder that

my brain was in a whirl! Barbe, yesterday a bride, and now a widow! Barbe, whom I had last seen as a joyous, care-free maid, now bereaved; her pretty head bowed with grief!

Thus I mused; yet, alack for man's selfishness, I did not now murmur to myself, "Poor Barbe." Sincere as was my regret that sorrow had come to her, my heart whispered persistently, "She is again free." And, for one upon whom she looked as a brother, my mood was cheerier than it had been for some time past.

The blank in our home circle caused by the absence of Barbe was by no means the only change we found in Quebec. The place seemed as another town. The great Comte Frontenac was no more, and although our Sieur brought a letter from the King to the new Governor, Monsieur de Callières, the latter received him but coldly. Neither his Excellency nor Monsieur de Champigny, the Intendant, favored the plan of founding a trading-post upon Le Détroit. De La Mothe chafed at their opposition; sometimes, of a fact, his irritation was not easy to endure. Thérèse was often in tears. 'Twas hard for her truly, since, much as Cadillac loved her, he was ever fuming over some barrier to his ambition; fretting at the very delays that kept him by her side.

Again he crossed the sea, and in the first part of March returned triumphant.

"Ah, Normand, my brother," he said in reply to my inquiries when I met him at the ship, "Comte Pontchartrain has presented me with a commission as Commandant of the new Fort, with a grant from his Majesty of land on Le Détroit wherever I judge best to establish the post. I shall proceed at once

to Montreal, and there complete my preparations for the expedition."

The sight of this commission wrought a change in the attitude of both the Governor and the Intendant. On the eve of Cadillac's departure he was bidden to an entertainment at the Castle, and I, as his relative and secretary, was invited with him.

CHAPTER TWELFTH

LE DÉTROIT

THE banquet-hall of the old Château presented a picturesque scene to the Governor's guests upon the evening of this farewell dinner. The lights of many candles shone upon the rare peltries, the tapestries and paintings, the antlers and deer heads on the walls, and caught an answering gleam from the sabres crossed above the chimney-piece. The table with its fine napery, silver, and glass, for richness compared favorably with those I had seen in the Old World, and around the generous board were gathered a company as illustrious as was to be met in New France. There as host sat Hector Louis de Callières, the Royal Representative; on his left was the Chevalier de Champigny; in the circle I recognized Jacob de Marsac, Dagneaux Douville, De Montigny, the Sieur de Repentigny, Godfroy de Tonnancour, the Sieur de Lavallée René, Michel Trottier, Sieur de Beaubien, and others.

Monsieur de Cadillac of course occupied the place of honor at his Excellency's right hand, and truly he graced it well.

Swiftly the time sped as the wine went round, and festivity, wit, and brilliant repartee were the order of the hour.

As the mirth waxed louder, my attention was attracted by a slight commotion at the door of the

hall, and presently an attendant approaching the Governor said something to him in a low tone.

"Messieurs," cried his Excellency, turning to the company, "an old sorceress asks permission to read the future for you; shall she be admitted?"

"Verily yes! by all means," rang the gay response around the table.

"Monsieur le Gouverneur, would it not be well for us to change places that she may not recognize any one by the position he occupies at the board?" suggested Godfroy de Tonnancour.

The proposal was quickly adopted, and when the party were once more seated, the fortune-teller was conducted into the room.

She was a tall woman, almost masculine in appearance, dark-skinned, withered, and notwithstanding her erect bearing, evidently quite old. Upon her shoulder was perched a crow with draggled plumage. The bird cawed shrilly as it found itself in the midst of a blaze of light. At sight of this ugly and bizarre witch and her familiar of evil omen, I must confess I felt a slight uneasiness, and quietly crossed the first and second fingers of my right hand to ward off any harm that might threaten from the presence or auguries of the hag, whose piercing black eyes seemed to read the soul of every man, as her glance roved from one to another of the festive company.

"How are you called, dame?" demanded his Excellency, leaning back in his chair, and looking as though he half regretted having permitted her to come in.

"I am known as La Jongleuse," she answered in a voice that had not, despite her age, entirely lost its natural richness.

"Well, sage woman, these gentlemen are willing

to test your art," continued De Callières, "but I warn you, read them good fortunes; for here in this New World, where life holds so many chances and mischances, we like not unpleasant auguries."

"I decipher what is written in the palm and on the countenance of each one who consults me, your Excellency," replied the witch; "it is not for me either to add to or alter what I see there set down."

The sorceress proceeded around the table, and as in turn each officer with some merry jest extended his hand for her keen scrutiny, she studied it closely, following its lines with her thin finger, sometimes breaking forth into guttural exclamations of satisfaction, again shaking her head ominously; nor did the attempt to disconcert her by the changing of places prove in the least effective. To each man she told some incident of his past, or matters that showed her to be at least marvellously shrewd in her divinations, and ventured also a prediction for the future. More than one of these latter I have since heard of as verified. At last she came to La Mothe, who had dropped into the chair beside me.

As her sharp eyes peered into his handsome, strongly marked face, they flashed brighter, and when he held out his hand she caught it eagerly; at the same moment the crow fluttering its wings stretched forward and viciously pecked at him.

This attack was greeted by a round of lively sallies from his fellow officers; but checking the bird by a tap upon its head, and with a look compelling silence, the sibyl began to read the destiny of my dear brother.

Of what she said I remember wellnigh every word, so strange it was.

"Ah, chevalier," she cried, "yours is, forsooth,

no common fate. You will soon undertake a long and perilous voyage ; you will found a great city ; lands and money shall be yours." She hesitated and turned away.

"Stay ! that is not all," urged Cadillac.

"Alack, monsieur, I do not wish to tell you further ; I was to predict for the gentlemen only pleasant things, is it not so ?"

"Chut, it is my will that you disclose to me all you can discern of my future," protested La Mothe, with impatience.

"So be it then, mon chevalier," replied the hag. "Alas, now I see your star obscured by clouds. Your colony will be rent by dissensions ; you will pursue a mistaken policy with the Indians and they will prove treacherous. The English will one day possess your city. They will tear down the fleur-de-lis, but their standard shall one day be torn down. Under a new flag your city will attain a prosperity greater than will come to any town in New France. You, however, will wander far from it ; for a season you will rule in a land of summer, but you will die in the country of your birth."

"And my children, will they inherit these estates and riches whereof you speak ?" murmured Cadillac, half to himself.

"I cannot say for certain," answered the witch, cautiously. "It will depend upon your own course. Do not be reckless in your ambition. One day the Nain Rouge will cross your path. Have a care ; if you offend him, your property will be lost to your heirs, your name will be scarce known in the city you are to found."

"Merci, wise mother, I shall not forget your warning," cried my brother in gay good-humor, as he

pressed a coin into her hand. "There is but one part of your forecast which I do not conceive possible; namely, that the fleur-de-lis shall ever cease to float over any land I may settle. By a new flag you would say, I ween, but another Bourbon banner to replace the old, so long shall it wave."

"A just interpretation, *Sieur de la Mothe*," said the Governor, graciously, "And now, gentlemen, allow me to propose a toast to the success of the venture whereof our friend the sorceress must of a surety have got wind."

"A toast, a toast!" echoed each guest, as he sprang to his feet.

Once more the silver cups were filled to the brim with the deep-red wine, once more they were raised aloft. All eyes turned upon Cadillac, as he stood before the company, bold, nonchalant, spirited, daring.

"To the future beautiful city of *Le Détroit*," cried *Monsieur de Callières*, with enthusiasm.

They drank the toast gayly.

"And to the good fortune of our brave *Sieur de Cadillac*," continued his Excellency.

The sentiment was readily applauded in still another bumper of Bordeaux, and forthwith the company broke up.

The next morning, it being the eighth day of March, 1701, we left Quebec for Montreal.

Although I had been at home since the summer before, on only a few occasions had I been able to see our dear Barbe, or, as I must now frequently name her in these memoirs, *Madame de Chateauguay*. She had lived in great seclusion at her seigneury on the St. Lawrence, coming down to Quebec but two or three times.

When the date was set for our departure, however, Thérèse sent a letter to apprise her that Cadillac and I would stop at Chateauguay to bid her adieu, which we accordingly did.

So pale and wan was she that my heart bled when I saw her thus, and I told her as much with gentleness, — I who had been wont to comfort the little griefs of her childhood. I begged her, too, not to be in over-haste to enter the convent, as it was rumored was her intention; and she so far heeded my words as to demurely promise that she would consider well before taking so serious a step.

Our Sieur and I made the voyage to Ville Marie without further incident of note.

Three months passed ere the expedition was ready to start. To avoid a possible attack from the Iroquois, Monsieur de Callières had decreed that we should take the upper route, by way of the Grand River of the Outawas.

At length, on the fifth day of June, we set out from La Chine with fifty soldiers and an equal number of artisans and traders.

Monsieur de Tonty, who had come back from Michilimackinac, was my brother's captain; Messieurs Dugué and Chacornacle were the lieutenants; Monsieur Vaillant came as missionary to the Indians, and for our chaplain at the post, I found, to my great joy, that we were to have one whose name has been indeed long absent from these memoirs, yet whose influence for good I might write down upon every page of my life. The dear friend of my boyhood, Father Constantin del Halle, was to go with us as the first curé of Le Détroit.

As we gathered for the start on that bright June

morning, our little convoy of twenty-five canoes made a brave pageant on the sparkling waters of the river. There in the sunshine were the soldiers in their blue coats with white facings, the artisans in their blouses, the voyageurs and coureurs de bois, with leathern jerkins brightly broidered with porcupine quills, red caps set jauntily on their dark heads, and upon their swift feet gaudy Indian moccasins; the black-robed Jesuit and the gray-frocked Recollet missionaries holding aloft the Cross beside the banner of St. Louis; the officers resplendent in their gorgeous uniforms and white plumed cavalier's hats. Truly, the picture they presented must have delighted the eyes of the habitants and dignitaries who thronged upon the green banks of the stream to watch our departure.

Monsieur de Cadillac was the last to embark. Having seen that all arrangements were complete, he stepped into his canoe and it was pushed out from the strand. Still, however, he stood erect, a most imposing figure in his azure habit with its crimson sash, a scarlet mantle thrown back from his shoulders, his sword by his side, and the breeze stirring the long thick locks of his black hair, as he waved his chapeau in a last adieu to the friends upon the shore.

It was, I think, one of the most thrilling moments of even his adventurous life, and as I looked upon him my own heart bounded with a sense of exultation. Were we not going to take possession of a new and most fair land; to plant a colony whither, according both to the missionary's prophecy and the prediction of the sorceress, the trade of all the world should one day come? Were we not going to set up the lilies of the Bourbon at the Gates

of the West and say to the English, "Ye shall come no farther!"

With a joyous "Hoop la!" the bargemen bent to their task; there was a long sweep of gleaming oars; another and another, as though a brisk wind rippled the surface of the river. With light, strong strokes they cleft the sunlit current; freighted as were the canoes with supplies and men, they leaped forward like the deer of the forest; on, on we pressed up the tide, and as we passed, the people of the little côtes along the water's edge came out to gaze after the expedition, and to cry out to us a "Dieu vous sauve," and a "Bon fortune."

Soon the boatmen broke into a song, keeping time as they rowed to the refrain, —

"Trois beaux canards s'en vont baignant,
En roulant ma boule.
Le fils du roi s'en va chassant,
Rouli, roulant, ma boule roulant,
En roulant ma boule.

"Le fils du roi s'en va chassant,
En roulant ma boule —
Avec son grand fusil d'argent,
Visa le noir, tua le blanc,
Rouli, roulant, ma boule roulant,
En roulant ma boule.

"Oh fils du roi, tu es méchant,
En roulant ma boule —
D'avoir tué mon canard blanc,
Rouli, roulant, ma boule roulant.

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"Par dessous l'aile il perd son sang,
En roulant ma boule.
Par les yeux lui sort'nt des diamantes,
Et par le bec, l'or et l'argent,
Toutes ses plumes s'en vont au vent,
Rouli, roulant, ma boule roulant,
En roulant ma boule."

An interval of steady work followed, and then they raised another folk song, —

“ Nous étions trois marins ;
 Tra, lala, lala, lidera ;
 Nous étions trois marins,
 Qui allions en voyage.
 Oh gai !
 Qui allions en voyage.
 Le vent nous a jetés ;
 Tra, lala, lala, lidera ;
 Le vent nous a jetés sur les côtes d’Espagne.”

Thus with stout hearts and merry chansons, we floated onward until the sun set, and above its rosy afterglow the evening star shone in the western sky, like a beacon of promise to guide us still. When it was nearly dark, for the moon rose late, the boatmen made for a point on the margin of the stream where there was a little beach, and presently we stepped upon the sand, and the canoes were pulled up out of sight among the trees that skirted the shore.

Here in the thicket the men built a fire and prepared our evening meal; and here, having dined, we posted a guard against a surprise from the savages, and encamped for the night.

Day after day, we continued our route, pressing on during the hours of light, and resting in the darkness of the forest; ever in danger from a savage foe, yet ever looking forward with glad hearts to the beautiful land of promise beyond.

It being the summer season, the weather was for the most part clear and bright, and in the evenings when the moonlight shone upon the waters, or glanced lance-like through the openings of the woods, one grew almost content thus to woo Nature in the wilderness; but now and again we had days of rain,

with thunder and lightning, when, forsooth, the jade appeared sullen enough, and we endured no little discomfort.

Often, too, by the way there were mutterings and complaint, several of the men and one of the officers becoming disaffected.

The other officers were, happily, good comrades and wasted no time in idle fault-finding.

Among the men, too, there were not a few who belonged of right to the estate of gentlemen, — younger sons of our Canadian seigneurs, who from a love of adventure and a desire to better their fortunes had come to us as bargemen, voyageurs, and even as artisans, albeit 't was afterwards discovered that these last must needs be apprenticed to their trades.

The voyage was not without its pleasures and pastimes. By day there were always new scenes to charm the eye; and at night, when on the border of some grove or upon a pleasant island our camp-fires were lighted, Monsieur de Cadillac and his brother officers gathered about the cheerful blaze. Well I recall those hours when we amused ourselves with gay conversation and reminiscences of bygone days, and my friends smoked many pipes of tobacco.

The while, in the men's camp, there were laughter, jest, and frolicsome dancing, wherein the picturesque red-capped forms of the voyageurs mingled with the painted figures of our Indian scouts.

From the river Creuse which falls with rapid current into the Outawa, we had a land carriage to another river, and thence a portage of two leagues to the Lake of the Nipicerines. Again, on the River "des François" there were short portages to avoid the five cataracts of the stream. From this point, however, the navigation was easier, and in coasting

along the Lake of the Hurons we met with many fair little islands which served us for shelter.

At length, after the thirty portages we had had in all, the broad ocean of the lake opened before us. Our voyageurs made objections to venturing on its expanse out of sight of land; therefore we kept along the eastern shore, and finally, some six weeks after we had left Montreal, our small flotilla reached the ruins of Monsieur du Lhut's abandoned trading-post, Fort St. Joseph. Having tarried to examine the place, our Sieur gave orders that we embark anew, and ere long we entered upon the river which the Baron la Honton described to his friends at Quebec as "the Neck," but which we now know as the upper part of "the Strait."

It was a tranquil scene, and on either hand the green, level country stretched away as far as the eye could reach, except where here and there a forest intervened.

Next we came to a curious place, a multitude of half-submerged islets where we saw Indians spearing fish, and where wild ducks and other water-fowl abounded.

We shot so great a number of the ducks that all available space in the canoes was taken up with them. Then we floated onward over the placid waters of the little lake of St. Claire.

Entranced by its peaceful loveliness, I cried out,—

"Ah, truly, mon chevalier, you did well to liken this clear lake to a shimmering pearl."

"In its pure and retired beauty it forms to my mind a vraisemblance of the Blessed Claire in her cell," exclaimed Father Constantin, with pious enthusiasm.

On the margin of these fair waters we encamped,

and the following day took to the canoes once more for the last stage of our voyage, — a short one, as it proved, for after two or three hours, as we rounded a point at the southern extremity of the lake, we saw ahead of us two islands.

“See yonder, illustrious *Sieur*, the two sentries set to challenge our progress,” called René de Monteil, dit Sans Rémission, one of the bargemen, to *Monsieur de Cadillac*.

“The island to the left, in its habit of rich verdure, puts me in mind of the courtier in velvet who guards the sleeping-room of the King,” I ventured in a low tone to Lieutenant Chacornacle, whose place in the boat was near to mine.

“And that other enveloped in woods, has it not a likeness to a mysterious chief enwrapped in the folds of a fine pelt or blanket?” said Dugué, leaning across to us.

“Perchance the *Manitou* of the strait has stationed his spirits there to forbid our nearer approach to his resting-place,” I heard the soldier *La Giroflé* remark to his comrades in a neighboring boat.

“We will render them powerless, if any such evil spirits there be,” said Father Vaillant, in a loud voice; and therewith he made the sacred sign over the island, while *Frère Constantin* murmured the formula used for the blessing of new lands.

We passed the place unmolested. Anon, at a signal from our *Sieur*, the boatmen rested their oars, and the graceful canoes of elm bark drifted on the current, as with a keen interest mingled with a feeling of awe we looked before us down the broad shining river, the real *Détroit*!

Monsieur de Cadillac rose from his place in the canoe and surveyed the scene.

It was a prospect to make the heart thrill with joy and thankfulness to God, who has made Nature so surpassing fair even in her remotest retreats and who had brought us safe through so many perils to this beautiful country.

The time was about three hours after noon on the twenty-fourth day of July. The midsummer heat was oppressive, but for the nonce, I wot, not one of the company was conscious of it.

Before us, with the sun shining full upon it, stretched the broad river, away, away, as far as the eye could reach; in the distance a glittering sea of gold and silver, — near by a swift current of sapphire waters.

On either side of the strait (as former voyageurs had told Cadillac) lay fine verdant plains adorned with many fruit-trees. In the air was the fragrance of the wild vines of the grape and of sweet-growing plants, and at the sound of our voices a deer that had come down to the margin of the waters to drink, bounded away and was lost in a clump of chestnut-trees. I was rejoiced that none of our party got a shot at his sylvan majesty; at the moment, it seemed to me, the report of a musket would have grated on the ear of any man with a love of Nature in his soul.

And so I think would our Sieur have felt had he marked the circumstance.

But he? As he stood looking down the river, he seemed for the moment as one exalted, so that the eyes of all in the boats were turned upon him. A light not from the sunshine shone upon his face, and his form took on a grandeur as if the archangel Michael had knighted him with his celestial sword.

For he was upon the threshold of his heaven-

given inheritance, and as he bared his head and raised his eyes to the sky, I knew his prayer was something such as this,—

“O God, thou hast delivered unto me great possessions. Praise and thanksgiving be unto Thee, and blessed be Thy name forever.”

So grand was his bearing that Chacornacle whispered me 'twas like a king come to his realm; and in truth, it greatly impressed all of the company.

The moment passed; La Mothe looked down at the chart in his hand; the captain of the voyageurs, who had before come through these waters, gave a word to his rowers which caused them to bring him quickly alongside the bark of Cadillac.

According to the chart, a short distance below the two islands, there had once been an isolated Indian village called by the savages Teucha-Grondie.

The captain spoke a few words to our Sieur and pointed to the shore.

Then we glided on, until, at a favorable place on the westerly bank, Monsieur de Cadillac gave the word for the beaching of the canoes. It was obeyed with alacrity, and anon the men leaped out and, uniting in willing energy, amid laughter, jest, and singing, dragged the boats far up on the pebbly strand.

A small number of Indians, Outawas, and Hurons whose lodges were near, startled yet friendly, came running down to meet us, and we gave them presents of beads and cloth which we had brought from Montreal.

On the crest of the green bank all of the company fell on their knees, while the missionaries Del Halle and Vaillant with prayer and chant set up the symbol of Christianity.

Beside the Cross stood Monsieur de Cadillac, clasping the staff of the Royal Standard; indeed, to my mind the golden lilies gleaming on their white field never seemed fairer than as the silken banner floated in the summer breeze above this oasis in the wilderness.

And now, as the resolute band of officers and soldiers, voyageurs, civilians, and coureurs de bois sprang to their feet once more, the clear rich voice of La Mothe awoke the echoes of the fair solitudes, —

“I hereby take possession of this site and of the lands on both sides of Le Détroit, from the Lake of the Hurons to the Lake of the Eries, in the name of his August Majesty, King Louis the Fourteenth of France, for the erection of a Fort and Trading-Post according to the power and authority granted to me by the Royal Minister, the most illustrious Comte Pontchartrain. And in virtue of the authority and powers vested in me as Commandant of this same, I decree that this Post be called Fort Pontchartrain.”

At these words he thrust the end of the staff into the ground; the swords of Messieurs de Tonty, Dugué, Chacornacle, and my own as well, flashed in the sunlight, and there pealed across the blue waters, and re-echoed from the woods the triumphant cry, —

“Vive le Roi! Vive le Sieur Cadillac du Détroit!”

“Thereafter the position for the stockade was selected, and in the near-by groves the axes of the woodsmen were soon ringing, that the first rude protection of the post might be established by night.”

Thus there was work of some kind for every one, while the sun sank to the west, leaving at last upon

the face of the waters a rosy afterglow, wherein shone lights of amethyst and amber; and the stars came forth, and, later, "the moon shone down upon the sturdy band of weary and houseless men sleeping upon the river-bank, the first white settlers of Le Détroit."

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH

PLACE AUX DAMES

THE winter that followed was dreary enough for all of us. Nevertheless our small circle at Fort Pontchartrain formed a congenial company.

There was Cadillac himself, brilliant in conversation and repartee; there was Monsieur de Tonty, suave, elegant, and professing a devoted friendship for the Commandant; there were Dugué and Chacornacle, ever gay comrades; and Frère Constantin, learned, accomplished, courtly, and a model of goodness and zeal in his daily life. Monsieur Vaillant and our Sieur unhappily did not chime. He was for the most part away with the Indians, and arduous and self-sacrificing was his work among them until he was recalled to France.

For our divertissements, we officers had sword-practice and singing, and as I played a little upon the flageolet, my music was much in demand. There were dancing and card-playing as well, and eau de vie for those that wished.

As for the garrison, and the motley number of artisans, boatmen, and wood-rangers who made up the population of our little town, the older men were wont to gather around the open fire in the great cabins of the Indian chiefs, smoking and telling stories; while the youths passed the long evenings in merriment, with dancing, feasting, when the

wherewith was to be had, and, alack, too often in carousing.

The first voyageurs who came through the strait after the breaking up of the ice brought news which gladdened the hearts of those among our officers and soldiers who had left wives in Montreal and Quebec. Madame Cadillac, Madame de Tonty, several other ladies, and a little band of the soldiers' wives, were on the way to join their husbands.

Thérèse with her wonted energy had gone to Three Rivers the September before, and, having according to La Mothe's previous instructions, bought up stores for the journey there and at Montreal, had, with her party, pressed on to Fort Frontenac, where they spent the inclement season.

During the days that followed, the sentries who watched the river had a pleasant task. Many times also did Cadillac and I wander down the bank of the stream, beyond the fortifications, and gaze abroad upon the blue waters as far as the eye could reach, scanning the horizon for a sign of the bateaux that were bringing nearer the brave, true-hearted women who, leaving friends, and kindred, and the comforts of civilization, were coming to make homes in the wilderness for those to whom they were bound by the dearest ties.

I too was eager to see Thérèse. Not only did I long for the society of my sister, but I knew she would be able to tell me of Barbe. Surely she, whom still in my thoughts I often called our dear demoiselle,—she who erstwhile had been so light-hearted, so dependent upon the company of her friends,—Barbe could not live on indefinitely in the seclusion of a lonely seigneurie of the St. Lawrence! Would she return to Beauport, or to the Guyon house

on the Place d'Armes at Quebec; or, more probably, would she not take up her residence with the family of the noble De Longueil? Yes, I was impatient to ask Thérèse concerning these matters.

Early one afternoon, as I stood looking down the strait, my vigilance was rewarded by the sight of a dark object just at the line where the blue-gray clouds and the silver waters met. I might have thought it a wild duck which as it flew dipped its wings to the surface of the stream, but, at the distance, only a much larger object would have been visible.

The jovial Jolicœur chanced to be the sentry of the time.

"Look, Jolicœur," I cried. "What is that dark speck upon the river, — a fog stealing up from the Lake of the Eries, think you, or is it the smoke of an Indian fire blown from the land?" The good fellow came up beside me and swept the horizon with his gaze.

"No, pardieu, it is a canoe!" he exclaimed.

"Indian fishers, perchance," I hazarded, not wishing to encourage him to give the signal over-soon.

Presently, behind the canoe there came into view another, and then a third.

Jolicœur called the news in a loud voice; it was taken up by the guard farther along, and within a few minutes every civilian in our little town was upon the river-bank watching the distant objects, which, albeit still indistinct, could only be a flotilla.

It was possible, however, that the occupants of the canoes might be Indians, — a party of redskins returning from the lower lakes, or perhaps even a band of Iroquois come with treacherous offerings of peace belts as they had done at Michilimackinac.

Our *Sieur Cadillac* accordingly ordered the garrison under arms. The great bateaux came nearer; now a white banner waved from the prow of the foremost craft as it glided up the shining pathway made by the sunlight. A sunbeam kissed the flag, and at the same moment we beheld its golden fleur-de-lis.

A glad shout went up from the spectators on the river-bank: "This is indeed the little fleet from Fort Frontenac!"

The cry re-echoed from the woods and the opposite shore; a salute of welcome was fired from our fort, the soldiers lined up to welcome the travellers with military formality.

The canoes had almost reached the settlement. *Monsieur de Cadillac* and his officers went down to the water's edge. I followed in company with *Frère Constantin*; the small throng of settlers pressed forward likewise, and the savages hastened from their villages, especially those from the village of the friendly Iroquois; for the Indians rightly regarded the coming of these valiant white women as an evidence of the continued good-will of the French towards their nations.

"Vive les dames! Vive les jolies Canadiennes!" shouted with enthusiasm our people on the shore. Their exuberantly happy greeting was answered by the boatmen of the canoe.

"Vive, vive! les habitants du Détroit!"

"Vive, vive! le Commandant du Roi!"

Now we could distinguish the figures in the canoe,—the Indian rowers, the sturdy forms of the Canadians who formed the escort of the women, the happy wives of the soldiers. But my gaze passed on to the ladies' flag-ship, as we had promptly named the bark whence floated the fleur-de-lis.

There I saw Madame de Tonty, buxom and comely, a charming picture of a young matron of New France, with several pretty children gathered about her; and Madame Cadillac, handsome and graciously dignified, as became the wife of our *Sieur*, yet with her old bright smile. Against her knee leaned little Jacques, her merry six-year-old son, who called out lustily at sight of his father and young Antoine, who had come to *Le Détroit* with us.

How De la Mothe's stern visage lighted up as he saw his wife and boy! Much as I admired him for his natural air of command, his haughty and even arrogant bearing, and the flashing glance that obtained from all an homage to his authority, I never thought him grander-looking, more worthy of respect, than when his proud countenance softened thus with affection for his noble-hearted Thérèse and their children. But, my faith! my gaze strayed quickly even from the countenance of my sister. For there, just beyond Thérèse, I beheld as lovely a vision as ever the dream of a poet portrayed.

In the stern of the canoe sat a young woman fair as the white fleurs-de-lis that grow in our garden at home in Quebec, her uncovered head crowned with a wealth of light hair that now shone golden in the sunlight; a woman in the perfection of her youthful beauty. It was she whose dear face had been so often before my mind's eye during the past year.

"Barbe!" I exclaimed involuntarily under my breath; and so great was my astonishment that I stood stupidly staring at her, as if she were indeed an apparition.

"Barbe!" She was paler than in the old days, and the gown of white wool that she wore gave her a

spirituelle appearance as, averting her gaze from the curious stare of the watchers on the river-bank, she looked down upon the swift current of the river and trailed a hand in the blue water.

'T was but one of the little graces of manner, as natural to her as breathing, and yet, self-contained man as I was, my eyes grew misty as I beheld her thus. To the other women this was a joyful coming ashore. It meant the reunion of husbands and wives, the re-kindling of home hearth-fires, the beginning of a new life with those they loved best.

But to Barbe? She was come a stranger to a strange land. Why had she come? To escape from the haunting sorrow which had doubtless pursued her from Chateauguay to Beauport, and thence to Quebec. Alack, poor girl, did she not remember that grief had come to her out of the wilderness?

"Babette, dear Babette," cried the boy Antoine joyfully, after a glad recognition of his mother.

His call aroused me. I sprang forward and reached the canoe just as the Indians ran it ashore. There were others almost as swift as I, and these with glad welcome assisted Thérèse and Madame de Tonty to debark. For my part, having taken out little Jacques and passed him on to Jolicœur, I turned to Barbe, and sweeping her a bow which might have satisfied a princess royal, said, —

"A thousand greetings, fair châtelaine." Then, forthwith, ere she had a chance to protest, I lifted her in my arms, as I had often done when she was a child, and carried her up the beach to where the sands were dry.

So amazed was she that she did not get her breath to say a word until I had set her down again.

She was angry, I could see; but presently her amuse-

ment at my impetuosity gained the ascendancy, and she broke into a rippling laugh.

"Mon dieu, Monsieur Normand," she cried, waving me off, and with a degree of her old sprightliness, "are these the primitive manners that obtain in these parts? 'Tis not surprising perhaps to see the lonely exiles of Le Détroit welcome their wives with some ardor; but is not your cousinly greeting over-demonstrative?"

I laughed too, perceiving that she was quizzing me, and then kneeling upon one knee, I raised her hand to my lips, saying respectfully, yet with all the gallantry I could summon, —

"Had I not claimed the privilege, an Outawa or other rude fellow, or mayhap one of the other officers, would have lifted you out of the boat; therefore forgive me, albeit I am not sorry for my daring."

"Eh bien! I have not come so far only to quarrel with you, so I must needs forgive, little as you deserve such clemency, even according to your own showing," she answered archly, and suffered me to draw her hand within my arm that I might conduct her up the bank.

But now my brother La Mothe came to greet her, and with him De Tonty, Chacornacle, and Dugué.

Thereupon she gave them a curtsy worthy of Versailles itself.

"Madame de Chateauguay," said Cadillac, with his grandest manner, "a thousand welcomes to Fort Pontchartrain! We are proud that Madame Cadillac has been able to induce you to accompany her to Le Détroit. Fort Pontchartrain is already beholden to her for so charming a guest, whom now she bids me to conduct to the manor-house."

"I thank you, Monsieur de la Mothe," answered

the young châtelaine with graceful dignity, "and for the honor you would pay me as a guest. Nathless I have come with Madame Cadillac but as a sister; therefore let not your chivalrous courtesy and the graciousness of the Seigneuress of Le Détroit interfere with the happiness to which you and your lady have looked forward so long. Lead the way with her, dear chevalier; I will come after with my cousin Normand."

Much gratified I felt in being thus selected to discharge the duties of her host, since she might have singled out either Chacornacle or Dugué, who with their military bearing and gold-laced habits presented a more imposing appearance than I, who, being but a lieutenant of militia, and dispensed from the regular drill, had not so martial an air and wore a less showy uniform.

In truth, however, all the officers and gentlemen of the post formed an escort to the ladies; and well did the little settlement look as we entered it, for the soldiers and settlers, in preparation for this hour, had hung streamers of cloth of many colors across the street of Ste. Anne, strung garlands of evergreen along the galleries of the rude houses from one rustic column to another, and set young spruce-trees as sentinels before the doors.

The drummer of the fort beat a gay tattoo, the bugler blew a merry blast of his horn, the procession that followed on gave many a cheer.

Thus it was that Madame Cadillac entered upon her life at Le Détroit. And thus did the lovely Châtelaine of Chateauguay come into my life again; the more, since I soon found that, despite her present wealth and distinguished position, she was still the same true-hearted Barbe as of old, pensive at times,

and more stately than in other days, but again piquant and sportive as in her girlhood.

And often it seemed to me strange that Barbe, although of English birth, should possess the vivacity and charm of the grandes dames of France, while I, of Norman stock, should be of a grave, dreamy, and somewhat melancholy disposition. But so it was, which only goes to show that temperament is not always a matter of nationality.

Marvellous was the change which the coming of the ladies and the soldiers' wives made in the settlement. The cabins, which hitherto had been but places of shelter or revelling, now took on the brightness of homes. The men, who had gone about unshaven and unshorn, began to pay more heed to their appearance; they wore their red caps with a jauntier air, their blue blouses showed no more rents or patches put on by awkward sewers. The garrison grumbled no more at the daily drill, and were ever ready to go on parade. The streets were livelier for the gay kirtles of the women, and it was pleasant in the church of a Sunday to see the Normandy head-dresses of the settlers' wives, the elegant fontanges, or coiffures, and veils of the ladies. The whole town was cheerier, and took on an air of thrift, prosperity, and contentment. As for our immediate society, we were like one family party; and the ladies aided Frère Constantin in his work of instruction and charity, both within the palisades and among the Indians of the surrounding villages.

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH

AN INTERVIEW WITH MILADI

ON a fair forenoon, shortly after the arrival of the little company which had wrought such a transformation among us, the sun looked down to find the settlement again in gala array. It was the day appointed for the May games, postponed from the first of the month that they might be witnessed by the gentler sex, whose presence would also so greatly enhance the pleasure of the holiday dancing.

I had gone to live with Frère Constantin, but on this occasion I repaired early to the house of our *Sieur*, which stood upon the crest of the knoll that sloped down to the *Chemin du Ronde*. As I approached, I saw the farmer-soldier *La Giroflé* and the bargeman, *Sans Rémission*, digging a hole in the ground, while the small *Pani* slave *Jules*, a boy of seven or eight years, busied himself in picking the last shreds of bark from a straight young birch-tree which lay on the grass near by and was to serve as the May-pole. To the sides of the pole blocks had been nailed. Thus, later, a nimble man might climb to the top, where had been left the little tuft of branches called the bouquet. To this was attached a rainbow-painted staff whence would soon float the white banner of the Bourbons.

"A good May-day to you, *mes honnêtes hommes*," I cried out blithely to the workers. "A good aim at the pole and a pretty partner in the dance."

"The same to you, Monsieur Guyon," returned La Giroflé, with a familiarity whereat I could not take offence on this festive day.

"And for me, monsieur, please add the wish for a goodly draught of our Sieur's eau de vie," urged Sans Rémission, looking up in a waggish manner. "La Giroflé here is all for the maids, but I — phouff! a draught of good liqueur fires my heart more than would the glances of the handsomest fillette of New France."

"As you will, each man according to his fancy," I responded with a laugh. "Still, you know we have a saying from Holy Writ, 'Wine is a mocker and strong drink is raging.' I fear it will use you worse than any fillette who holds sway over La Giroflé."

"Oui, oui, for my fillette is most gracious; I have known her but three days, yet she has promised to marry me on the fête of St. Jean Baptiste," returned the latter, cheerily.

"Ay, ay, the little waiting-maid of Madame Cadillac," said Sans Rémission, as he shut one eye and looked at me knowingly with the other. "Bah, she will have promised to marry a score of others by this day fortnight."

La Giroflé was not dismayed by the prediction. "He who dares step in between us shall have scant quarter," he declared; and forthwith the daredevil fellow fell to singing with all his might, in a voice that was naturally rich and full, —

"Vive la Canadienne et ses jolis yeux doux."

Meantime the people had begun to gather upon the green.

"Vive la Canadienne et ses jolis yeux doux."

To every man of New France the words of the old song will ever conjure up before his mind's eye the face he loves best.

"Ses jolis yeux doux," I repeated to myself, as I proceeded across the sward, "ses jolis yeux doux."

At the moment the door of the house opened, and there came out, on the broad gallery that fronted on the river, the party of the Seigneur, — Monsieur de Cadillac, his wife Thérèse, their little sons Antoine and Jacques, and the young Châtelaine of Chateauguay, Miladi Barbe, of whose sweet eyes I had been dreaming.

Our company was soon joined by the wife of De Tonty, and her children, the lieutenant himself, and the other officers.

When all were seated, a deputation of the habitants, headed by De Lorme the interpreter, came up to the step of the gallery.

"Monsieur de Cadillac," began De Lorme, after a profound bow, — "Monsieur de Cadillac, we pray you accord us permission to plant our May-pole before your house, that it may bring you

‘Health, happiness, and cheer,
With good fortune all the year.’”

My brother the Commandant rose to his feet and ceremoniously granted the request. The curé asked a blessing upon the festivities; then La Giroflé, Sans Rémission, and others slowly raised and planted the pole. When it was firmly in place, habitants, voyageurs, and soldiers broke forth again into the gay refrain, —

“Vive la jolie Canadienne,
Vive la jolie Canadienne.”

After the chorus our *Sieur* advanced and good-humoredly accepted the column of happy omen; a barrel of eau de vie was tapped, and Cadillac pledged the King and wished prosperity to all present. During the short delay caused by this tapping of the spirits, the agile *coureur de bois* Sans Souci had climbed the pole, and from its top he now shouted lustily, —

“Vive le Roi, —
Vive le Seigneur du Détroit.”

The cry was taken up by the throng below; the drum sounded, the bugler blew his most stirring blast, the voice of the little cannon of the fort saluted the May-pole.

“A brave holiday, is it not, *Madame la Châtelaine*?” I said, approaching *Miladi Barbe*, who stood leaning against one of the cedar posts of the gallery. The other dames had gone forward to admire the pole and exchange greetings with the people, and now she remained alone, viewing the scene with an ingenuous pleasure, as if she had put aside her own sadness that the least shadow might not be cast upon this gala day for others.

“A brave holiday,” I repeated. “Do you know of what I am reminded when I behold your interest in our simple merry-making?”

“I am not a sibyl to read your thoughts, *Monsieur Normand*,” she replied with a flash of her old-time sportiveness, “yet—did I venture to try—”

“What would you say?” I urged with the foolish eagerness of a boy.

“Why, the festivities recall to you by contrast the May-dances you saw in Old France, and the beauty of the great ladies who as spectators condescended to grace the scene with their presence.”

I gave her a quick glance; but her gaze was fixed upon the little tuft of green near the top of the May-pole, and if I fancied she was less pale than a moment before, perhaps it was the effect of the sunlight shining on the gallery. I opined she should have understood me better. But, though she was my sister's guest, so taken up had she been since her arrival by the attentions of every one at the post that until now I had kept aloof from her.

"Phouff! no, indeed, my reminiscences were not of Old France," I rejoined with a degree of impatience, adding awkwardly: "And as for the ladies, assuredly my thoughts do not need to travel across the seas in order to pay homage to beauty."

Miladi's eyes unmistakably twinkled with merriment.

"No," I continued, somewhat nettled; "I was only thinking of certain springtimes now long past, when a dreaming schoolboy with his fusee across his shoulder went a-Maying with a gay little light-haired maid who danced and skipped before him all the way; laughing back at him as he stumbled abstractedly after her, or challenging him to a race over the newly green meadows of Beauport, yet never venturing far from his side after all, lest some dark Indian form might spring out from a clump of bushes and snatch her away ere he could bring down the savage as one shoots a prowling wolf of the forest. And how the color of the early violets just matched her eyes and the arbutus her cheeks, as I teasingly told her; and how now and again she bade me hold a 'bouton d'or,' or buttercup, under her chin, that I might see, by its golden reflection there, whether she liked the famous galettes au beurre of Aunt Guyon, even though I knew very well

already she had ever a sweet tooth for the toothsome cakes."

"Yes, yes," interposed Miladi softly, encircling the rough cedar pillar with her white arm, and inclining her pretty head towards me, — an artless and unconscious trick of manner natural to her from her childhood.

Holding her attention, I went on: "And then my remembrance flew back to a day not in spring, although the morning was fair, and there was joyous commotion in Quebec. A pretty fillette chose as her cavalier a youth just home from Acadia, that she might go down with him to welcome the homecoming of the great Governor Frontenac. How enthusiastic grew the little demoiselle at the cheering wherewith the populace greeted him who proved their deliverer during the siege that followed. And it was not in spring, either, yet there came to my mind, too, a day when, as by a touch of the wands of the Dames Blanches (White Fairies), the pretty child was transformed into a fair demoiselle who, with the spirit of the Lady of Fort St. John, defied a Bostonnais officer, a doughty admiral, ay, a whole English fleet, and selected an obscure young Canadian lieutenant of militia to champion her cause before the Governor."

As I proceeded, Miladi Barbe had averted her face; now, when she turned her eyes upon me once more, I saw that they glistened with tears. Nevertheless she shook her head and laughed lightly. "Ah, Normand," she said, "how amiable and pleasant you were in those days! What has so sadly changed you?"

"I changed! I exclaimed in unfeigned surprise. "T was not I, but the fair demoiselle, who altered.

Too quickly, alack, all the cavaliers of Quebec began to pay her court, and the dull friend of her childhood could not successfully vie with them for her favor."

"No, no, no, 't was you who changed," persisted Barbe; "yet we will not argue the matter, for, Normand, it is not on this point I now complain. It is this, — I knew you as the friend of my happy childhood at Beauport; I knew you as the morose cousin of Quebec who was wont to take me to task because I was not sufficiently demure to please his fancy; I knew the friend who laid his sympathy at my feet at Chateauguay. But since I have been here, since we have met again, my cousin, in sooth, I do not know you at all."

"And why?" I asked, at sea as to her meaning.

"Why? Because in the old days I was ever to you Barbe, or Babette, or the little demoiselle, and you were far more chary of praise than of blame, more straightforward than flattering. Now I am Madame le Moyne, de Chateauguay, or Madame la Châtelaine. And such a preux chevalier as you have become, — until now you have scarce spoken three words to me save in the language of compliment. You search for honeyed phrases, as if I had neither sense nor reason." And with a girlish pout she tapped her foot impatiently upon the floor of the gallery.

Is there aught in the world so like to be wide of the mark as a hazard of what will please a woman?

"But you ARE Madame de Chateauguay," I protested stupidly. "Could I be such a churl as to neglect to give you the title due to the position you hold as the daughter-in-law of the noble Sieur de Longueil? Still, for the sake of old times, I will gladly call you Miladi Barbe, if you will grant me the

privilege. As for compliment, is it not the language of courtesy, the homage due to beauty everywhere?"

With a droll little sigh of deprecation Miladi clapped her delicate hands over her ears.

"Normand," she cried, "formal compliments may be very well for strangers, as the current coin of our society of New France, that would fain ape the courtly manners of Versailles. But from you I expect the simple sincerity of speech to which I have hitherto been accustomed. And — and you shall call me Barbe, or Babette, or else nothing at all, for you are my cousin, my brother. Therefore remember, that we may not be at odds. Ah, look! They are going to salute the May-pole. Monsieur de Cadillac takes a fusee and prepares to fire; let us go nearer, to watch the sport."

Thereupon she stepped off the gallery and tripped across the grass to join Thérèse and Madame de Tonty and the group about the May-pole.

I followed slowly after, being betwixt two minds as to whether to be in a good or ill humor after this wordy passage at arms.

'T was pleasant that she had asked me to call her by the name of her childhood, that she would fain re-establish the old friendliness between us; yet, on the other hand, I had no wish to be her brother, and liked not, therefore, the rôle she designed me to enact.

For it was long since I had ceased to combat with my own heart, whose secret had been revealed to me upon the ever-memorable day in Paris when Cadillac thought I had been touched at fence.

In my pride I was resolved to hide the truth from others, and most of all from Barbe herself, but her coming thus unexpectedly to Le Détroit had put me off my guard.

I had loved her always; at first, indeed, with the love one has for an engaging child, but for long with the devotion which a man gives only once, and to his ideal of womanly purity and loveliness. It was a love so familiar that only at her marriage, when I found I must needs pluck it out, only then did I discover that it had formed my happiness. Not to have struggled against it then would have been but to insult her. But when she was once more free, and ever since, she had reigned in my heart.

Was it her pleasure or her kindness, now, to let me know that if she would not accept from me the language of flattery, still less would she have from me the speech of a lover?

My compliments, forsooth, were too ill-framed to please so fastidious a beauty! What a fool I was to feel so elated a moment before! Well, at least, I would not be made the sport of her coqueties.

Now I know that these coqueties arose from a guileless wish to please, and not from any intent to deceive or deeply wound either the hearts or the vanity of those who paid her court; but then I looked at the matter differently, and it was in a puzzled mood that I sauntered across the sward and, instead of joining the ladies, took up a position on the edge of the ring of spectators.

Cadillac had opened the sport of blackening the May-pole, by firing at it a gun loaded with powder only; his wife Thérèse, Madame de Tonty, and Miladi Barbe shot at it with good aim; next De Tonty and the other officers, De Reaume, and I blazed away at the shining white mark; finally, all the soldiers and settlers took their turn, until the stately column was blackened its entire length.

In the shade of the groves near by, tables were

spread for a feast, and there was dancing upon the green.

"Was ever a more fascinating scene?" I said to Frère Constantin, as we stood together, watching the merry-making.

In the "ronde" wove in and out many picturesque forms, — the habitants and voyageurs in their holiday garb, their blue tunics fresh and bright, the seams of their deerskin trousers trimmed with yellow fringe, their moccasins ornamented with beads and porcupine quills, their scarlet caps and sashes conspicuous bits of color; the soldiers' wives in gayly tinted jupes and wonderful head-dresses; the soldiers wearing proudly their uniforms of azure faced with white.

Now, in front of the gallery Monsieur de Cadillac leads Thérèse to the dance also; they are quickly surrounded by their little circle, the officers resplendent in gold-laced habits, cavalier hats, and with powdered hair that hangs down upon their shoulders in a queue tied with a riband; Mesdames Cadillac and De Tonty, and the fair Châtelaine of Chateauguay, displaying the rich costumes they brought from the land of civilization for just these occasions, — silks and brocades sent over in the ships from the mother country, and cut according to the fashions of the most splendid court of Europe. I wished for the skill and colors of an artist that I might put it all upon canvas.

"Ay, it is a joyous picture of an Arcadia in the wilderness," rejoined the gentle Recollet, well pleased to see his flock engaged in innocent recreation, and forgetting for the nonce the many hardships of their lives. "May Fort Pontchartrain long remain thus contented and happy!"

"Right cordially do I say Amen to your wish, good friend," I responded somewhat absently, for through all the mazes of the dance my eyes followed the graceful figure and piquant face of Miladi Barbe as she trod the measure with her partner, Robert de Reaume, or swept a courtesy to Dugué or Chacornacle.

I have heard since then of a painter lad who came up from an obscure village to Versailles some three years after we were there awaiting the pleasure of the King's ministers, — a young painter who made so bold as to depict the ladies of the Court thus dancing on the green, and even put into their hands the crooks of shepherdesses. One Antoine Watteau he was, and instead of being punished for his audacity, he was taken into favor by the King, and made much of by the nobles. Thus, by his rural scenes peopled with courtly Corydons and shepherdesses in rich attire, he has won both fame and fortune.

Yes, Watteau was his name; but never did his poetic brush depict fairer lady than was Barbe at the raising of the first May-pole of Le Détroit.¹

¹ The May-pole, ever among the people of New France a symbol of homage from the censitaires to their seigneur, and an emblem of good fortune, was left standing before the manor until the coming again of the May-time.

CHAPTER FIFTEENTH

THE RED DWARF

ONE morning, having left my quarters at the habitation of Frère Constantin to go to our Sieur for my instructions as secretary, I found myself among another gala throng, assembled upon the green in front of the manor. We of New France dearly love a pageant of ceremony, and are ever ready to lighten our tasks with a holiday.

I had been away for some weeks with the Recollet upon one of his missionary journeys, — which I delighted to share since they lay through the beautiful, mysterious woods, and also because they gave me his close companionship.

The significance of the present gathering was at first lost upon me, therefore, but soon all was made plain. The crowd divided to the right and left, and along the pathway thus formed a man, finely apparelled, approached the house at a slow and stately pace.

I recognized the stanch De Lorme, the King's interpreter, coming to render to our Sieur the tribute of faith and homage for the rich tract of farm-land above the fort which Monsieur de Cadillac had recently granted to him. He was a handsome, rather pompous man, of about forty years of age, with flashing, restless eyes and long dark locks, and was well qualified in appearance for the rôle he played.

Arrived upon the gallery, De Lorme stood a moment, faced the spectators, and then, wheeling about and assuming his most ostentatious air, gave three resonant knocks upon the oaken door.

It was opened by Gaspard the Acadian, Cadillac's major-domo, who bowed low and ceremoniously waited to be told the errand of the visitor, albeit he knew it very well.

Ere De Lorme could state it in due form, however, an incident occurred which was not upon the program.

From within came the sound of boyish laughter, and the next moment, out from the shadowed entrance hall rushed Cadillac's young sons, Antoine and little Jacques, brushing past Gaspard, and nearly overthrowing the pompous De Lorme, in the romping excitement of a merry chase, Jacques in the lead but apparently fated to be quickly captured by his elder brother.

"Fi donc! young messieurs, höla! Stop, I pray you!" cried the poor major-domo, while the older men in the crowd threw up their hands in horror that tradition and the conventions should be thus outraged.

But, unheeding the sensation they had caused, the boys broke through the throng and came running in my direction.

Ere I could intercept them, the soldier Jolicœur sprang forward, caught up little Jacques, and set the struggling child upon his shoulder.

"Hist, petit bon homme!" he cried. "You will want to see what goes on."

The bluff sergeant was the lads' especial friend; many the story he had to tell them, and many of his free hours were given to their amusement.

Had they not now been stayed, much I fear me they would have repented their breach of discipline and their escape from the house; for Cadillac had already begun to train them to military obedience, and Thérèse was a strict though a gentle mother.

Meantime Jean Favart, dit De Lorme, having recovered his breath and smoothed down his ruffled dignity, requested an interview with the lord of the manor.

Gaspard retired to acquaint the Seigneur, and De Lorme stepped back upon the grass.

Anon Monsieur de Cadillac came forth from the house, wearing his blue court uniform and cavalier's hat with its long white plume, his sword, as ever, by his side.

De Lorme uncovered his head, came up to the step of the gallery, and, kneeling upon both knees before our Sieur, said in a loud voice, —

“Monsieur du Détroit, Monsieur du Détroit, Monsieur du Détroit, I render you fealty and the homage due to you on account of my fief of De Lorme which I hold of your Seigneurie of Détroit; and I proclaim my willingness to acquit the seigneurial and feudal rentes and all other lawful claims in their season, beseeching you to be my good lord and to accept me in faith and homage.”

With the gracious condescension that so well became him, La Mothe accepted the fealty of De Lorme, bade him rise to his feet, and gave him a draught of wine in a silver goblet which Gaspard had set upon a rustic table close at hand.

Then the sturdy interpreter, again bowing low, gave place to Pierre Malet, Jacob de Mersac, Jean Richard, and others who had also been granted lands and in turn offered their homage and received a

cup of wine, — Gaspard filling it from a great silver flagon the burnishing whereof was his especial pride. After, there was feasting and dancing as on the May holiday.

Pleasing as was the scene to me, I was more interested to mark its effect upon the two boys, whose youthful chatter to Jolicœur I plainly caught.

“What is it all about, Jolicœur,” urged Jacques, from his perch on the soldier’s shoulder.

“De Lorme and the others are paying homage to Monsieur de la Mothe, as they will render fealty to you some day,” replied the good fellow simply, as though this explanation was sufficient.

“But it is Antoine who will be seigneur after my father,” protested the spirited boy, sportively struggling to free himself from the iron clasp of the sergeant.

“Ay, to be sure, Master Antoine will be lord of Le Détroit,” responded Jolicœur, with an approving glance at the lithe, well-built lad by his side, while at the same time he shifted the restless Jacques to the other shoulder; “but you too, mon petit maître, shall one day be a grand seigneur. This seigneurie of the strait will grow too great for one man to manage, and our Sieur will partition it among his children, as the Sieur de Longueil divided his lands among his sons. You will be lord of the Ecorse and the Grosse Isle, down yonder.”

“No, that tract is for Madeleine; I have heard my father say as much,” corrected Antoine, with a shake of the head.

“Ay, ay, for one of the little demoiselles, your sisters, whom Madame Cadillac left at school with the Ursulines of Quebec?” said Jolicœur, interrogatively. “Eh bien, then perchance you will have the

rich lands of the Grosse Pointe and along the upper shore, Maître Jacques, — yes, mon bon petit maître, you are sure to be a rich seigneur, one day.”

“When I *am*, Jolicœur, you shall have the best fief in my gift, and when you come to pay me homage I will give you a draught of wine out of a gold goblet,” declared the child, clasping the neck of the hardy soldier in an impulsive embrace.

“Ah, verily you have the heart of a good seigneur,” answered Jean Joly, patting the little fellow with hearty affection.

“Jolicœur shall have a fief from me too,” maintained Antoine, stoutly. “I will not give him up to you altogether, brother; the seigneur of Le Détroit cannot spare such men as he. And when he comes to acknowledge me lord, I will give him a golden *flagon*, full of wine for himself.”

The sergeant laid a hand caressingly upon the arm of the elder lad.

“Thanks, thanks, my young gentlemen, if I live long enough, I shall be no lack-land,” he said; “yet look you, so the wine be good, you need not trouble to buy the golden cup and flagon. Jean Joly asks nothing better than burnished silver to drink from; but the wine, ah, that may be as grand as you please. When I come into my fiefs, if you would fain treat me far beyond my deserts, a draught of Burgundy, or —”

“You shall have such wine as is served at the King’s table,” promised Antoine gravely, whereat Jolicœur laughed again, — the pleasant, contagious laugh that wells up from a brave, cheerful, and unselfish heart.

I turned away, amused by the talk of the three merry comrades, for Jean Joly, despite his manly

strength and fortitude, was in his light-heartedness as much a boy as either of the other two. Nevertheless, by the involuntary sigh that followed his happy laugh, I knew he was thinking he would either be dead or else a feeble old man by the time the sons of Cadillac would come into possession of their seigneuries.

That evening I walked with our *Sieur* beside the river. In the clear summer sky the light of the stars began to pale before the rising moon, whose argent disk was appearing above the dark woods on the opposite shore.

"I do not marvel at the faith of the habitants in the 'dames blanches,' the white fairies of the moonlight; such a night as this casts a spell upon a man," I remarked as we paced the strand, — he with measured tread, his hand wandering often to his sword-hilt, as if now and again some thought vexed him. I suiting my step to his, and glad to bear him company: for notwithstanding his high position, and the happiness of his domestic ties, he was often lonely, as are all men of a proud, imperious, and ambitious nature.

"Yes, such surroundings are prone to break down one's habitual reticence and reserve," answered La Mothe, with a nod of the head. "The moon, the Queen of the 'Dames Blanches,' is, of a truth, very like a woman. Her soothing influence, her soft beams, like the gentle sympathy, the sweet smile of a woman, beguile a man to confidence and too often to a foolish unburdening of the heart and his own undoing. Your loyalty to me and your discretion have, however, been well tested, my brother. Therefore at times I mention to you matters whereof I speak to no one else — no, not even to Thérèse,

although, God knows, no man has a more devoted wife than I have. Still, this is no reason why a man should shift a heavy share of his anxieties upon the heart of this true friend, as if his own were not strong enough to carry them."

He spoke in all sincerity, he who was wont to worry Thérèse full often with his moods. But if I smiled to myself, I highly prized his trust in me, and I said as much.

"Normand," he continued, "you, better than any one on Le Détroit know what I have accomplished since we came to this region. I have not only established a fort, but founded a colony that is already prosperous. In twelve months we have put ourselves in a position to do without provisions from Canada forever. And all this undertaking was carried out with the three months' provision we took when we set out from Montreal, the which was consumed on the journey. This should prove to the Ministers in France whether Le Détroit is a desirable or an undesirable country. Moreover, as you know, besides our own people, six thousand savages have wintered here. And yet this colony has not cost the King so much as a sou."

"Your management has been extraordinary, mon chevalier," I replied, "since the savages who settle at Ville Marie and Quebec are allowed soldiers' rations, even to the little children, and are also given frequent presents."

"Ay, and the Governor and the Intendant will not allow me so much as a pistole to use for presents," he said bitterly. "Were this not the fertile paradise of America, I could never have achieved what has been done since we landed upon this stretch of beach."

"And now," I went on with enthusiasm, "now that the foundations of your colony are well laid, you will begin to reap the reward of your labors. Each year henceforth should add to your wealth and influence. Your name will become illustrious, your authority is supreme on Le Détroit, you are like to realize the wildest dreams of your ambition."

"Hist! hist! Normand!" cautioned De la Mothe, glancing about him uneasily, as if he half expected a foe might be lurking in ambush near by. "The wilderness has ears and a voice. Therefore say not too much of the power I hold. Power begets jealousy, and plots, and calumnies. Have you given any heed to the demeanor of Monsieur de Tonty of late?"

"De Tonty!" I exclaimed in surprise. "I have remarked him to be somewhat taciturn and low in spirits, but his wife says he has taken the ague. Surely he is, as ever, your good ally and most clever aid."

"He is called clever who cheats and plunders his friends," asserted Cadillac, in a tone that intimated he would brook no contradiction. "Monsieur de Tonty is growing cold; an Italian, he is subtle, like his astute countryman, Machiavelli. Say nothing to him that you would not wish an enemy to know, Normand."

"He has ever been too reserved to hold much converse with me," I returned.

"Then concern not yourself upon that score, save to be on your guard, as against a dog that sleeps with one eye open. But there is a trouble which galls me more," he continued. "It is the dispute with the missionaries of Michilimackinac. Monsieur de Carheil remains firm in his resolution not to follow the

Indians to this post; only a few Hurons are left to him there, and this fall I hope to pluck the last feather from his wing. Yet I am persuaded this unyielding old man will die in his parish without having a single parishioner to bury him."

I sighed.

Bold, enthusiastic, sometimes visionary, prompt in action, and impetuous of speech, my brother possessed to a degree the art of alienating those with whom he should have worked in harmony. By bringing the Hurons and Outawas to Le Détroit, he had destroyed the great Mission at Michilimackinac; and remembering his haughty manners to Monsieur de Carheil, I marvelled not that the latter declined to come to our southern settlement, since discord between the Commandant and the missionary would present a deplorable spectacle to the aborigines. Still, I saw how Monsieur de Tonty and others were like to use this quarrel to their own advantage.

"Mayhap a policy of conciliation —" I hazarded. But La Mothe interrupted me.

"I asked not advice," he cried with angry impatience; then, regretting the outburst of temper, proceeded more quietly: "Well, no more of this. I would but have you comprehend, Normand, that, notwithstanding all fair appearances, a demon of discontent and misfortune stalks abroad. I use, to be sure, a figure of speech; but Jules, the little Pani slave, and the coureurs de bois have been telling my young sons idle tales of some imp of the strait, a hobgoblin of the Indians, to whom they say it is best to give a wide path."

"Ah, yes, 'le petit Homme Rouge,' I have heard of him too," I said with a laugh.

At the same moment there flashed upon me a recollection of the banquet given in honor of our *Sieur* at the *Château* of *Quebec*, and I added jestingly, "Why, truly, is not this mischievous 'petit homme' the very 'Nain Rouge' whereof *La Jongleuse* bade you beware, *mon chevalier*?"

"Phouff!" exclaimed *La Mothe*, his good humor restored, "I would all the evils in my way were as imaginary. Bah! There is no satisfying these frivolous *voyageurs* and *coureurs de bois* whom I have sought to colonize. After all I have done for them, they grumble because I, a gentleman and a *seigneur*, have silver-plate and fine damask for my table, and go well attired with a sword by my side. Yet it is I, not they, who have given this new province of *Le Détroit* to the King."

He lapsed again into moroseness, and for some time we paced the strand without further conversation.

Of a sudden, and so silently that I doubted if I saw aright, there appeared upon the beach, a short distance before us, a strange, uncouth figure.

Whether it arose from beneath the earth or stalked out from the shadow of a clump of bushes that overhung the bank, I could not say; but *Cadillac* saw it too, and half drew his sword as I did mine. In those days an enemy might spring up beside a man at any instant, and it behooved him to be ever prepared.

The moon had been under a cloud, but now it shone full upon the repulsive form of the intruder.

"A misshapen Indian," muttered *Cadillac*. "What is he doing here? Is he a spy or a half-breed woods-ranger, who has sought to overhear us? If so, he will repent of his hardihood."

The creature approached nearer. It was neither Indian nor white man, though perchance an embodiment of the worst natures of both; a being, apparently, half-human, half-gnome, short of stature, very red in the face, and with a blazing eye whose horrible stare, instead of burning, turned the blood in one's veins to ice. The apparition was enwrapped from head to foot in a blanket that I took to be crimson, as well as I could see it in the moonlight, and his diabolical grin displayed a wide mouth and sharp fang-like teeth.

"My faith! the tradition of the savages was, after all, no fantastic story," I ejaculated in horror. "This can be no other than the Nain Rouge, the Demon of the Strait."

"Demon or human, he shall not obstruct my way," cried our *Sieur*, enraged.

The malevolent Red Dwarf came up close to us; it stood directly in our road, and, taking off its wood-ranger's cap, bowed low to our *Sieur* in most ironical fashion.

"*Sacré!*" exclaimed Cadillac, in a fury. "Get out of my path, you spawn of Satan!" and forthwith he dealt the creature a blow with the back of his sabre.

Albeit the frame of the dwarf looked the concentration of a giant's strength, I thought to see him felled to the ground. Instead, however, a mocking discordant laugh rang out upon the air, and the creature vanished.

"Alack, Cadillac, what have you done?" I cried. "You were warned to make friends with this demon, to beware of offending him; now, alas, in giving way to your anger you have incurred his enmity."

La Mothe broke into a peal of merriment. "Nonsense, Normand!" he said. "The moonlight has

tricked your eyes, or else over-much clerkly work has impaired their vision. The dwarf was but a hunch-back Indian. It had been better, perchance, had I struck him down with the sharp edge, rather than the back of my sword blade. A dead enemy cannot molest a man, whereas now this fellow will be as a thorn in my flesh."

"Yes, yes, it must be so; my eyes served me false. It is strange what pranks the moonlight plays, investing some objects with a beauty they have not of a verity, and conjuring up weird forms out of the shadows," I answered. "But, mayhap, after all, my brother, it is better you did not kill the dwarf; I dare say he is half witted and can do you no harm."

Thus did we both make pretence to pass over the occurrence as a trivial matter.

Nevertheless I feel sure that no more than I, did our *Sieur* believe the *Nain Rouge* to be human. And although, I understand, he quietly caused search to be made, never was any such misshapen savage found among the Indian villages that cluster about Fort Pontchartrain.

CHAPTER SIXTEENTH

SCHEMERS

SEPTEMBER was come. At the river edge Indian boatmen were lading their canoes with peltries that had come in too late to be sent to Montreal earlier, and making other preparations for a voyage down the lakes.

A convoy was to depart that day for Fort Frontenac and the St. Lawrence, with some score of voyageurs, who were bound thither with the hope of being engaged to conduct a new party to Le Détroit after the winter, when the breaking up of the ice should again leave the way navigable.

Returning colonists, happily, there were none. The only passenger was to be Robert de Reaume, who had come as escort of Madame Cadillac and the other ladies.

"You are resolved to go, Robert," I asked regretfully, as I walked with him upon the prairie that lies between the palisade of Fort Pontchartrain and the woods. "Since Monsieur de Cadillac has made you a grant of land, and fortune is like to offer a man better chances in a new country than in a town, where many are pushing and elbowing for preferment, why not decide to remain, even at the eleventh hour?"

De Reaume shook his head.

"No, I must go," he replied. "Doubtless you surmise why I so readily accepted the responsibility of escort to the ladies in their journey hither. I in-

deed esteemed it an honor to be chosen for the duty by Madame Cadillac. Ah, Normand, your sister Thérèse is a noble woman! Often did I admire her fortitude during that voyage of over three hundred leagues in an open canoe, with Indians and rough voyageurs; for notwithstanding that we wintered at Fort Frontenac, the spring travelling was most difficult, because of the winds and rains. Never shall I forget her answer to the dames of Quebec who came down to the Esplanade to bid her adieu when we set out.

“ ‘Turn back,’ they pleaded, ‘this arduous voyage might be braved if you were going to a pleasant country, where you would have the comforts of life and good company; but why should you go into a wilderness where you will be like to die of ennui?’ ”

“Madame Cadillac only laughed at their lamentations and answered with spirit, —

“ ‘Do not waste your pity upon me, my dear friends. I am more than content, I am anxious to go. A woman who loves her husband as she should, has no stronger attraction than his company, wherever he may be. Everything else should be a matter of indifference to her.’ ”

“Ah, Normand, it is the love of such a wife that inspires a man to great deeds. I do not wonder Monsieur de Cadillac finds his courage sustained through many ordeals. Nevertheless, glad as I was to render service to my noble cousin Thérèse, it was because of the fair Châtelaine of Chateauguay I came to Le Détroit.

“You know well, I have long loved her. When she was but a young demoiselle, I asked her for her hand in marriage; but so distressed was she, so sweetly confused at having to give me pain by

saying me nay, that I saw her heart was no longer her own to give. At first, indeed, I thought it belonged to you, Normand, but I speedily discovered my mistake, for soon she wedded the *Sieur de Chateauguay*.

"All the world knows how she mourned the death of the noble young bridegroom called by a soldier's duty so cruelly from her side. Yet youth does not grieve forever. And when I heard she was bent upon continuing her life of seclusion by withdrawing into the wilderness with *Madame Thérèse*, I determined to come also, thinking I might give her aid and protection during the journey, and hoping the steadfastness of my affection might make an impression upon her in the end. I meant to be patient, to bide my time, and perhaps take up the grant of land that *Monsieur de Cadillac* so kindly bestowed upon me. It was impossible, however, for me to see and speak with *Barbe* often and yet keep this sage resolution.

"One day I went to the manor-house. *Madame Cadillac* was absent upon some errand of charity or kindness at the *Huron* village, but in the little salon I found *Barbe*. She was solitary, and her pretty eyes were dimmed by tears.

"Impetuously I told her again of my love; I begged her to marry me, and vowed I would do everything in my power to make her happy.

"But, no; she said to me gently, it could not be. She thanked me, with an appreciation that was almost tender, for my devotion, yet added with firmness, I must put the thought of her out of my mind, she could never be my wife; and this answer she begged me to take as final and forget her.

"Still I protested, I must needs remember; whereat she prayed me to forgive her then for whatever dis-

quietude she had unwittingly caused me, and to be as ever her good friend.

"What is there but for me to accept her decision? After what has passed, my presence here would only be an annoyance to her; and besides I could not stay, and be so near yet so apart from her."

Much was I moved by this unexpected confession from De Reaume.

When he ceased to speak, I laid a hand upon his shoulder in cordial affection, and said with warmth, —

"Yours was a noble devotion, my friend; but, thank Heaven, life holds other interests than those of making love. And were it not so, I have heard from Madame Cadillac that never did Quebec boast a fairer bevy of young demoiselles than are the maids who finished their studies at the Ursulines last year."

"I would there were no demoiselles or dames in the world!" interrupted Robert, passionately.

That day he left us, and I remember still his hearty hand-clasp as he bade me adieu. It was long ere we met again; but I may as well set down here that the spring after he said farewell to Le Détroit, he was married at Montreal to Elizabeth Brunet; the same who, as a little girl, so bravely endured the privations and perils of her flight with Madame Cadillac from Acadia. And I presume this blithe Elizabeth consoled him for his whilom disappointment, for I have heard they lived most happily together. I understand, also, that two of his sons, Hyacinthe and Pierre, afterwards took up their residence at the strait upon the lands Sieur Cadillac had granted to him.

Of the homage which Miladi Barbe received from the officers of Fort Pontchartrain there was, besides

myself, another witness, to whom the beauty of the young châtelaine brought an unquiet heart.

Over all the region of Le Détroit was the glory of autumn. The tall trees about the fort minded me of the spirits of departed Indian warriors of heroic mould, arrayed in their blankets of scarlet and decked in gold-color, umber, and vermillion. Already the savages were preparing to withdraw farther into the forest for the hunting.

At the manor Thérèse was busied daily in superintending the conserving of wild grapes, pears, plums, and quinces into sweetmeats for winter use, and the needle of Miladi Barbe flew swiftly, as she helped to fashion the garments of bright-hued chintz cloth which the ladies were accustomed to give as presents to the women of the Indian villages.

Barbe, with a shrinking from the dark faces of the savages, induced by the tragedy of her infancy, would never consent to visit these villages. Yet, with a charity that, considering her antipathy, partook of the heroic, she held, three times a week, in the outer kitchen of the manor-house, a class in sewing for young Indian girls; and on Sundays taught the prayers of the Church to the little red-skinned children, who loved her and named her, after their beneficent wood-spirits, "la Dame Blanche" (the White Lady), because of the exquisite fairness of her complexion.

And she grew fond of them too, I know, and forgot the duskiness of their skins. For with Barbe all childhood was beautiful; and ever, to this day, even in the most wretched and unsightly waif, she sees, I think, the image of the little Christ; as often, when I behold her soothing some little one, she seems to me a picture of the sweet Madonna.

Of the girls who came to her for instruction in needlework there was one, a slight, fawn-like maiden, handsome, as the Indians esteem beauty; at least her eyes were flashing, her black hair glossy and luxuriant, and her teeth as white as white wampum shells. So earnest though awkward at the task was this girl, that in teaching her the gentle *châtelaine* took more care than with any of the others. Fawn-like, did I call her? Rather I should say, mayhap, she was graceful and pleasing as the sparrow-hawk, so admired for its bronze-tinted plumage and the flaunting beauty of its crest of scarlet and blue and its red-tipped wings. Like the sparrow-hawk, too, Bright Bird she was named, or Ishkodah.

It was remembered afterwards, that whenever Barbe took up the rude handiwork of Ishkodah, to show her the better way to set a stitch or turn a seam, she was sure to sharply prick her finger; and more than once the beauty of Miladi's white hands was marred by a long ugly scratch from the needle of the Indian.

If Barbe suspected that these trivial happenings had their origin in the pettiness of feminine malice rather than accident, she said nothing on the score to any one. Very sure am I that she did not for a moment dream of the cause, much less the extent, of the maiden's animosity to her.

One evening I had chatted long with Frère Constantin over our simple dinner. It was therefore later than usual when, leaving him to the reading of his breviary, I took my way to the manor to spend an hour or two.

From some distance off my steps were guided by the blaze from the hearth-fire of the salon, or main apartment of the house. The night being warm for a fire and yet too damp without one, the shutters of

the windows had been left open, to temper the air of the room to a pleasant balminess, there being, of course, no glass in the sashes.

Other illumination of the interior there was none, but as I drew near I could plainly see the occupants: Cadillac smoking before the chimney; opposite to him Thérèse, in the stately high-backed chair brought for her from Quebec, knitting in the firelight; and near by, on the settle, whose rudeness was concealed by beaver skins, gaudy blankets, and gay-colored cushions of swansdown, sat Barbe, a charming picture in her robe of sad-colored satin, with its long pointed waist and high ruff, her hair dressed high and rolled back from her face, save for the short locks that curled about her brow and shell-like ears, — after the coiffure of the fashion doll sent out from France, the which Thérèse showed me.

Beside her sat the handsomest man at the post, Dugué, and she was apparently giving him a lesson in music (as well as in love), for between his hands he held her guitar in an ungainly manner, and thrummed upon the strings; whereat she laughed, and shook her head with a pretty affectation of a music-master's despair over a dull pupil.

Now, though so picturesque, the scene was not to my liking; I paused as though stayed by the hand of fate, and stood without in the darkness, looking with moroseness upon the happiness and tranquil content within.

While I contemplated the tableau, feeling that I must have a moment to recover my equanimity before entering, I heard near me a faint sigh, and glancing sharply about, I saw, crouching beside a lilac bush close by, a blanketed figure.

My hand sought my rapier, but presently I noise-

lessly dropped the sword back into its scabbard as I perceived the watcher was none other than Ishkodah, the Indian girl, the daughter of the chief Mawkwa, the Bear, and a belle among the braves of her village. Ishkodah, the Bright Bird, but how changed! Never have I seen jealousy, anger, and heart-breaking sorrow more clearly depicted than were these emotions portrayed upon the countenance of this dark maid of the forest as she remained motionless, her gaze riveted upon the beautiful white lady and the handsome lieutenant. And when at last the young châtelaine in gay desperation caught up the guitar from the cavalier, and their hands for a second met, the agony that shook the frame of the unhappy Indian girl caused me almost to forget the thrill of pain it had sent through my own heart.

For there came to me the recollection of a story Dugué had told me the year before. One day upon the prairie, hearing a cry of terror, he had followed it, and found this girl striving to keep at bay a wild-cat by the sheer force of her steady eye, while she screamed loudly for help.

Calling to her not to change her position, Dugué with a shot from his fusee brought down the panther. Seeing it was indeed dead, the girl, in the reaction from her terror, caught the hand of her deliverer and pressed it to her heart, vowing eternal gratitude; then like a deer she sped away to the village above the fort.

At the time we had rallied Dugué much over the adventure, and hinted that he had best complete the romance by taking a dusky bride. For Cadillac would fain have the unmarried men of the settlement wed the daughters of the forest, hoping thus to render closer the friendship between the Indians and the

French, and Frère Constantin was ever ready to bless these marriages in due form before the altar.

Veron de Grand-Mesnil had, shortly before, been hot to espouse the daughter of the Pottawatomic chief, Churlioa, but her stern old pagan father would not hear of it, and spirited her away, to be mated to a warrior of a distant tribe.

Whether Dugué, in the loneliness of our isolation, would have succumbed to the charms of the maiden whom by his prowess he had saved from a cruel death, it is useless to surmise. Soon after this incident Madame Cadillac and her party reached Fort Pontchartrain, and at the first glimpse of the beautiful widow of the gallant Le Moyne, the lieutenant, I verily believe, promptly forgot the existence of the Bright Bird. With Ishkodah it was different, however. That she still treasured the remembrance of her deliverer was only too evident to me as I beheld her now. Doubtless because of his prompt response to her cry for succor, she had enshrined Dugué as the ideal warrior of her heart. For his sake perchance she had declined to accept as a husband any brave of her tribe. She had seen one among her companions solemnly married in the church of the good Ste. Anne to a Frenchman; why might not a like happy future with the fair-faced warrior be sent to her by the kind Manitou of whom Father Constantin told her people?

Thus no doubt had she cherished the day-dream; therefore I pitied the girl. Still, I liked not the fierceness of her visage as she looked in upon the cheeriness of that home room. She might dog the footsteps of Dugué and make life as miserable for him as she pleased, for all I cared; but I would not permit her glance to rest longer on Barbe. Who could tell,

mayhap she might cast upon Miladi the Evil Eye, or weave about her some uncanny spell of forest witchcraft!

Ah, had I but divined, had I so much as dimly suspicioned, the thoughts of vengeance that were taking form in the mind of the savage, what dire consequences might have been averted! But I saw only a girl, who was scarce more than a child, disappointed that the hero of her youthful fancy was charmed by the smile of la Dame Blanche.

So absorbed was she in watching the firelit scene, that ere she felt my proximity I leaped forward and grasped her arm.

Only the instinctive caution of her nature could have checked the exclamation of alarm and surprise that sprang to her lips, but which she choked back, until it might have passed for the note of a frightened wood-bird.

"What does Ishkodah here?" I demanded in a low tone, yet with quiet sternness. "How is it she is within the palisade when, according to the order of the Commandant, the gates are closed at nightfall and no Indian is permitted to remain inside the fort during the hours of darkness?"

The girl faced me with an air of defiance, and said in the patois, half French, half aboriginal, by which we had learned to communicate with the savages and they with us, —

"Ishkodah was kept waiting too long in the White Chief's kitchen. She had come to the fort of the French with a mocock of wild grapes for the wife of the chief. When she set out to return home, it was already dark and the gates were fast barred."

"She had but to stand forth so that the light of the guard's lantern might fall upon her face, and he would

have opened the wicket for her to go out," I answered severely. "But, be this as it may, I will now set Ishkodah free, that she may return to the lodge of her mother as a bird to its nest."

The maiden laughed softly but unmusically, —

"The warrior of the Swan's Quill should know a young bird returns no more to the nest when once it has spread its wings; far more like is it to fall into the snare of the woodsman," she responded bitterly. "Ishkodah will gladly be released from this cage of the white man; in its air she scarce can breathe; her heart is oppressed as by a heavy burden, she longs for the peace and forgetfulness of the forest."

"The Bright Bird will return to the kitchen then," I said. "She will ask one of the Pani women to go with her to the gate. If I find she has not departed within half an hour, I will have her locked up in the prison."

The girl clenched her hands and tossed back her head proudly, but she had no choice save to obey. Casting upon me a malignant look, and with a last glance through the window, she turned away towards the kitchen, while I, passing on to the gallery, entered the house by the main door.

Later, I made inquiry of Sergeant Jolicœur after he had been the round of the sentries, and he told me he had himself opened the wicket in the palisade and let Ishkodah pass out, about nine of the clock. He volunteered the further information that she often brought fruit to the manor to exchange for some trifling article of feminine adornment, and was most eager to learn the graceful industries of the white women.

This good account of the maid did much to dispel my uneasiness over the sullenness I had read in her

face. Moreover, a day or two later, I encountered her at the door of the church, and she flashed upon me a smile of rare radiance, while saluting me with respect. So guileless did she appear, that I gave myself no further concern over the recent occurrence, beyond a resolution to note her general behavior toward the ladies. And I reflected 't was indeed a pity so bright a creature should have lost her heart to Dugué, who bestowed not a thought upon her, although this was small wonder when he might haunt the sunlight of the presence of the loveliest lady in New France.

A week or more later, I was at work of a morning in the King's Storehouse, as it was called, though the goods stored therein, having been secured by our Sieur, belonged not to his Majesty, but to Cadillac.

I had the ledgers upon the counter and was making entries of the trade of the post, when La Mothe came in.

"Normand," he said, after making sure there were no eavesdroppers to carry away his words, "I have now positive proof that De Tonty is striving to ruin this settlement. He has planned to establish a fort on the river of the Miamies and to draw thither the Indians of this neighborhood, in order that Fort Pontchartrain must needs be abandoned. His pretext is that if the French do not seize upon the position, it will be speedily occupied by the English. Of this, however, there is not the slightest danger. His real object is to weaken my authority, that he may rule in my stead."

"Oh, what treachery sometimes lurks under the mask of loyalty!" I ejaculated, throwing down my quill, for here was a more important matter than the adding up of accounts of peltries.

"Yes," continued my brother; "he has carried on his negotiations with much wiliness, reporting to Quebec and Ville Marie and even to France that the lands about the strait are unfruitful, the fishing bad, the hunting rapidly falling off."

I broke into a laugh that any one should make statements so absurd.

"Ay, 't would be a subject of merriment truly, were not the consequences like to prove no laughing matter," returned our *Sieur*, grimly.

"But how did you learn of these schemes, *mon chevalier*?" I asked, again intent upon the significance of what I had just been told.

"In the most direct way possible, yet one upon which the schemer never counted. A letter came to me from Count Pontchartrain himself, setting forth the charges against me and demanding an explanation. This I am only too glad of an opportunity to give, yet how can I refrain from taking exception to the manner of the demand?"

"Alack, be moderate in wording your response, *mon *Sieur**," I cried, "and thank Heaven the minister has shown you so great a mark of his good-will. While you possess his favor you have the ear of the King."

"Normand, you are a wise counsellor," replied De la Mothe, with less of excitement. "You shall write out at my dictation the letter I send to France, and if the phrases grow too hot, I give you leave to tell me, that I may temper them. Yes, the Italian will scarce supplant me in the confidence of the Count. Unfortunately a consequence of his acts menaces us nearer home. He has stirred up discontent among the Indians. I have noted many unfriendly looks from them of late; we must beware of an attack. I think,

however, he has himself become a trifle alarmed, for last evening when I gave orders that the guard should be doubled and the garrison sleep under arms, he assented most readily."

"Nevertheless, this was not done," I declared, starting up.

"Not done!" cried Cadillac, astonished and in a rage; "how is that? Dugué and Chacornacle heard my order as well as De Tonty. You know I retired early to my house to read this self-same letter, but it was reported to me duly that my commands were carried out."

"Mon Sieur, I have heard something of this," I said, "for it was commented upon. If you remember, Monsieur de Tonty walked with you to the manor after you had left the barracks."

"Yes, and descanted upon how we had best conciliate the savages," rejoined my brother, with a nod.

"Exactly. But when he returned, he announced that you had countermanded the order you had before given. The guards were not doubled, therefore, and the garrison slept, as usual. The report you received had reference to this supposed later order."

For the next few moments the air scintillated with the expression of Cadillac's wrath.

"It was a daring game!" he exclaimed more quietly at length; "but I can dissemble as well as this false friend, if it so suits my purpose. For the present I will feign to know nothing of this duplicity; in the future, however, Messieurs Dugué and Chacornacle shall have warning to receive instructions from no one but the Commandant of this post, either by written order or word of mouth. De Tonty

should know ere now that this fort is not a King Petard's Court, where every one is master. Normand, you have put me on my mettle. There is a parry for every thrust, and courage and foresight vanquish in war more frequently than the implements of the trade."

CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH

"THE COMPANY OF NEW FRANCE"

THE next flotilla from Montreal brought a large packet of mail which our *Sieur* withdrew to read in solitude. I was at work in the garden of *Frère* Constantin, planting the vines I had brought from the forest about the house-door, that at the coming again of summer their beauty might conceal the rudeness of the little cabin. I had been thus occupied for perhaps half an hour, when Sergeant *Jolicœur* paused at the gate, for the house and church were enclosed by a palisade, although the pickets were not so strong nor so high as those of the fort.

"Well, my friend, what is it?" I asked bluntly, impatient of the formality of his military salute.

"Le *Sieur* Commandant prays you to give him your company, *monsieur*," he answered, and then, unbending a degree of his soldierly precision, added with a grim smile, —

"'It is a wise man that leads anger by the bridle;' there is some trouble stirred up by the Red Dwarf, over yonder."

As he shot a glance in the direction of the barracks, I frowned and, casting aside my spade (the rôle of gardener was new to me), prepared to go at once to *La Mothe*, surmising that he had need of my offices as *amanuensis*.

"Ill news is a nimble messenger, *Monsieur* Guyon," continued sturdy Jean Joly, whose tongue the ar-

rival of the convoy had unloosed like wine. "The bargemen say there are great doings at Fort Frontenac over the claims of the new Fur Company of the Colony. I trust the like may not come to pass here. Not a week since, Sans Rémission saw the Nain Rouge prowling about on the edge of the wood; this he swears to!"

"Sans Rémission had quaffed too deeply of the juice of the wild grape," I interrupted tersely. "That the Commandant has unwelcome intelligence may be; that there is any connection between his letters from Quebec and the wanderings of an Indian gnome of the forest, it is absurd to imagine."

"Eh bien, 'An old ape never made a pretty grimace,' and I'll warrant the appearance of the Nain Rouge bodes no good," muttered Jolicœur, shaking his head.

I waited to hear no more foolish speech from the brave sergeant, often as I had been wont to humor his loquacity.

Arrived at Cadillac's quarters, I found myself in an atmosphere that was as the state of the air when the lightnings play over the strait and the roll of the still distant thunder gives warning of an impending storm. La Mothe was pacing the room like a lion goaded to fury. In his hand was a paper which bore the Governor's seal.

"Read this, my chivalrous secretary, and see how I have been made to beat the bush that others may catch the birds, how I have sown seed in the wilderness that others may reap the harvest," he cried passionately.

I took the document he thrust into my face and hastily ran my eyes over it. Thus it began: —

"Be it known that the Governor General and Intendant, in consequence of the orders which they have received from

the King, do by these presents and acceptances, in the name of His Majesty, cede, and convey to the directors of the Company of New France from this day forth the posts of Le Détroit and Fort Frontenac, in such condition as they now are, for the Company's use, to traffic in furs, to the exclusion of all other inhabitants of said country, so long as it shall please His Majesty.”

Much more there was, and Monsieur de Cadillac was invited to confer with the directors and the Governor as to the sum to be fixed upon for his salary as Commandant; but the transfer was a severe blow to him, since by it he lost his prestige as sole ruler of the region bordering on the strait, and the permission to trade, which constituted the advantage thereof.

A few days later, with the people of the fort, I watched an unexpected canoe come gliding up the river, its pennant flying, and its painted sails filled with the fresh west wind.

As it approached the shore, I perceived there were several passengers, who by their dress I took to be men of note; therefore I slipped away, esteeming the obscure secretary of the Commandant would not be missed when visitors of distinction were to be entertained. On such occasions I was often beset by a morose dissatisfaction with myself, because I was still unknown and had made so little of my life, albeit I had mapped it out in glowing colors. Alack, how well I had learned that “golden dreams fill not an empty purse, and he who plants thorns will not cull laurels.” Doubtless the strangers were travellers bound for the upper peninsula. The like adventurous spirits sometimes came our way, now that the circle of the lakes was complete and there was a

safe stopping-place upon Le Détroit. Who they were I should discover soon enough, I thought, as I betook myself again to the Recollet's garden.

Ere I had been there long, however, Jules, the little Pani slave, came to announce that our *Sieur* desired my presence.

In the room of the barracks usually occupied by the Commandant as a council chamber, sat De la Mothe upon the dais, looking the personation of the Thunder Manitou turned to stone. Behind his chair of state, De Tonty and the other officers of the post had ranged themselves, and before him stood three men in the costume of civilians, beneath the thin veneer of whose courtesy of manner might be discerned a certain arrogance and haughtiness.

A man wears not his character like his coat upon the outside, and he is sure to err who would judge another by his gear alone. Nevertheless sometimes the fashion of a knave's garments may furnish a clue to the habit of his mind. Therefore I will set down a description of these worthies as they appeared at first sight to us at Fort Pontchartrain, though I took little account of the details of their vesture until afterwards.

The first, a swarthy man of some thirty years of age, wore a suit of fawn color faced with red and ornamented with gold and silver buttons. The short cape that hung over his shoulder was edged with a broad gold galloon, and wound jauntily around his hat was a scarlet riband.

His companion to the right was a handsome fellow of a fresh, rosy complexion, merry blue eyes, and an easy, happy-go-lucky manner. The sombreness of his coat of brown was relieved by facings of silk, having peach-tinted flowers and green leaves upon a

buff ground. The waistcoat was of the same silk, but the breeches and stockings were of brown, and upon his finger he indolently spun a cap of blue plush that was laced down the seams with gold.

The third was a quiet gentleman, older than the others and more dignified in his bearing. His habit was all of gray laced with silver; the quarters of his shoes were scarce more than an inch broad, and his three-cornered hat had no feather.

The two younger men were 'Dos Blancs,' — little Jules had told me, — that is, they wore powdered peruques, from which their shoulders were white as is the coat of the mule when he returns from the mill. The queue of their associate in gray was neatly encased in an eelskin bag. These personages, attired as they were in the newest fashions of the Colony, and affecting in the texture of their garb the fine cloth that had begun to supersede the rich brocades and satins of a decade past, seemed to flaunt their modishness before us whose raiment was grown somewhat shabby in the wilderness; for, despite the skilful needle of Thérèse, even the grand court apparel of Cadillac began to show some slight signs of wear.

When I appeared at the door, the Commandant made me a sign to take a place at the writing-table near to him, that I might set down notes of whatever might occur.

As I did so, he said to me in a low tone wherein was a ring of irony, —

"These gentlemen are Messieurs Radisson, Arnaud, and Nolan, commissioners of the Company of New France." Then turning to the newcomers with a courtesy so elaborate as to have in it a degree of sarcasm, he continued, —

"Monsieur Arnaud, I will ask you to state more clearly what you have just said in part, that it may be duly recorded."

Monsieur Arnaud, the man in fawn color, made a step in advance of his colleagues.

"Monsieur de Cadillac," he said with a profound bow, at the same time awkwardly sawing the air with his chapeau, "in accordance with the recent grant to the Company of New France, as set forth in the documents lately forwarded to you, we are come, as commissioners of the company, to take charge of the trade of Fort Pontchartrain; and we respectfully demand that you turn the same over to us without delay, in compliance with the order of the Governor and Intendant, and in obedience to the will of the King."

"'Sdeath!" I heard Cadillac mutter under his breath, and the veins in his forehead grew purple. Howbeit he held his indignation in check as a master hand controls a fiery charger.

He was saved from the necessity of replying immediately by Monsieur de Radisson, the man in gray, who interposed amicably, —

"Be pleased to understand, Monsieur de la Mothe; the company undertakes to keep this fine fort and all its buildings in as good repair as they now are, thus relieving you of all expense for the maintenance of the same."

"Hence, Monsieur de la Mothe," added Nolan, the young macaroni in brown, who must needs have his voice in the matter, — "hence my colleagues and myself are not only appointed overseers of the store-houses, but are charged with the care of any advances in moneys and goods made by the King for this post."

"His Majesty has never made advances of moneys nor goods for Fort Pontchartrain," responded Cadillac, proudly.

Nolan stared at him in blank astonishment, scarce crediting, I dare say, that our *Sieur* had been so foolish as to maintain the post out of his private means.

"But his Majesty *will* make advances," he said, after a moment of hesitation.

La Mothe smiled sardonically.

"Like enough," he rejoined with emphasis; whereat Nolan grew less self-assertive.

"It is also submitted to you, *Monsieur le Commandant*," continued Radisson, taking up again the thread of their discourse, "that the King shall support the garrison of the fort, but the *Commandant* and one other officer shall be maintained by the company."

"Yet neither *Commandant* nor officers shall trade for furs with the savages nor the French, under pain of confiscation of said furs, and other penalties prescribed by the King," interrupted Arnaud.

"Of the gains of the company, however, the *Intendant* shall deduct annually six thousand livres French money, being the gift of his Majesty for the support of honest families in the country who may need assistance," concluded Nolan.

Cadillac rose to his feet.

"Gentlemen," he said with a calmness that surprised all who knew his impetuosity, although 'twas the calmness of anger at a white heat, "you have come quickly on the heels of the Governor's messenger. The demands of the company are of a surety most sweeping. Not in this manner was *Monsieur de la Salle* rewarded by the Government for his foundation in the land of the *Illenese*; no such restric-

tions were placed upon Monsieur de Tonty when he would fain have established a post on the river of the Miamies." Here I saw De Tonty wince as at a poniard's thrust. "It is generous of the company to take off my shoulders the enormous expense of this colony which I have borne so long," proceeded Cadillac. "Still, I am not altogether minded to give up my rights and privileges, especially when I have a good sword at my hand, faithful followers," — here he looked around at his officers, his gaze ignoring De Tonty, — "and a well-fortified post to aid me in upholding my position."

"Rash Sieur," protested Radisson, while his companions exchanged glances of uneasiness.

The Commandant broke into a scornful laugh. "Have no fear, my doughty commissioners," he said; "it is not my intention to clap you into irons forthwith, even though the company proposes to place galling fetters upon me. However obtained, the order is genuine. My rights have been trampled upon, my possessions taken from me in one stroke. But there are things which La Mothe Cadillac prizes more than his possessions, more even than his rights; and among these things are his honor, and his fidelity to the King. My sword, my possessions, my life, have ever been at the service of his Gracious Majesty; he may do with them according to his pleasure. Until I can state my case to France and receive a reply, I will prove my loyalty by bowing to his Majesty's command. Howbeit, have a care that you encroach not in the least degree upon my military prerogative. I am Commandant of Fort Pontchartrain and Seigneur of Le Détroit, and I shall enforce my authority."

Thereupon he strode from the room with the air of an offended prince.

Without doubt the commissioners expected no different greeting, for when our *Sieur* had withdrawn thus in sullen haughtiness, Arnaud deprecatingly shrugged his shoulders, and turned to De Tonty; Nolan studied the rafters, and hummed a fragment of a song; only Radisson looked uncomfortable.

Dugué and Chacornacle, following the example of their chief, stalked out of the chamber, taking no further notice of the civilians; but Monsieur de Tonty in his most urbane manner now approached the strangers.

"Messieurs, your reception has been somewhat warm, but I trust there will be no serious clash between the company's commissioners and the military authorities of Fort Pontchartrain. Nay, I feel sure there will not be, since we are all such devoted servants of his Majesty," he said with a sinister suaveness.

I, who had stopped to gather up my papers, glared at him and tapped my sword. A hot speech was upon my lips, but Monsieur Radisson quickly said:

"I would fain assure Monsieur de Cadillac of my respect for his position and authority. May I beg of you, Monsieur de Tonty, to convey to him my sentiments?"

His companions appeared surprised, and I read in the lowering visage of De Tonty that he was not like to burden his memory with the commission.

"Monsieur de Radisson," I said, addressing that gentleman with a courteous bow, "I will be pleased to carry your message to Monsieur de Cadillac, lest Monsieur de Tonty may forget it."

De Radisson started, and a deep flush dyed his cheek for a moment. But half comprehending that I had meant to warn him of the friction between the

Commandant and the captain of the post, with a dignified inclination of the head, he replied, —

“Thanks, monsieur, in any event it will bear repetition; I gladly accept the service you offer.”

Then, with my notes in my hand, I went away, leaving the three newcomers to the society of the Italian.

I found Cadillac at the manor. Our *Sieur* had given orders that he willed to be alone; nevertheless, braving his displeasure, I made my way to the salon, where he had flung himself into a chair.

“Well, Normand,” he cried, as I entered, “this is the hour of my humiliation. I must needs be prudent; I must, forsooth, weigh my words as in a goldsmith’s scales. You remember the prediction of the old hag, La Jongleuse, that night at the Château of St. Louis. Is this the first step in the fulfilment of her accursed augury? Father de Carheil is gone from Michilimackinac. Is his prediction come to pass? Is the inheritance I have sought to gather for my children to be scattered like chaff?”

“You take too gloomy a view of the situation, *mon chevalier*,” I protested, for never had I seen him so depressed. “If a cloud for the moment obscures the sunlight of your good fortune, it will soon pass, and the future will be all the fairer for the contrast.”

Awhile longer he sat brooding, then suddenly started to his feet with a new energy.

“At least I cannot now turn back,” he cried. “But, Normand, I charge you have search made for that diabolical creature, that incarnation of Indian malevolence, the Red Dwarf. We shall have naught but strife and dissension on Le Détroit while he roams abroad. I will dig a prison deeper than the Mamer-

tine for him here within the fort; I will have him cast into the depths of the strait, with the grindstone of my mill which this trading company would take from me—with this grindstone about his neck; I will send him as a gift to the Iroquois.”

“The creature will be indeed more than human if he survives this series of deaths to which you condemn him,” I responded dryly.

Thereat my brother broke into a boisterous laugh.

Now a laugh, even though wrung from an angry heart, clears the air of the spirit, as the report of a powder-charged cannon clears the lowering atmosphere.

So, having fired off his artillery both of indignation and of half-hearted mirth, La Mothe grimly set himself once more to conquer circumstance.

CHAPTER EIGHTEENTH

THE MYSTERIOUS FIRE

“FIRE! Fire!”

The awful cry rang out in the night, breaking the silence with sharp distinctness, and, borne onward by the wind, carrying terror to the hearts of the white settlers upon the shore of Le Détroit. There was but one other evil to be more feared, an attack from the savages; and the colonists, aroused from the depths of sleep by the sudden warning, knew not but this fiery visitation might be a forerunner of a still fiercer and more cruelly relentless foe. The house of Frère Constantin, where I lodged, was outside the palisade, the good father having wished that his cabin and the church might be so located that the Christian Indians as well as his French parishioners might have free access to this little sanctuary in the wilderness, and be able to claim the ministrations of the missionary at any time.

“Fire! Fire!”

The shout of the sentinels quickly awoke me, and springing from my bed of buffalo pelts, I hastily dressed, and passing beyond the curtain of deerskin that separated my room from the main apartment, opened the door of the cabin.

As I went out, some one laid a hand upon my arm. It was Frère Constantin in his gray cassock and cowl, calm, but as ever prompt and resourceful, thinking only of hastening to the assistance of those

who might stand in need of his services, physical or spiritual.

Once in the road, we saw before us a bright light like a beacon of flame, which proceeded from the centre of the fort, while the air around us was thick with smoke and flying sparks.

"It is the manor!" I exclaimed in a frenzy.

"I scarce think so," replied Frère Constantin, "but you may be right. God protect those who are in danger."

Together we ran to the gates of the palisade. Seeing us, the guard threw open the wicket, but no sooner had we entered than he closed and barred it with a swiftness which I noted as an evidence that he had been warned not to relax his vigilance at his post even though the heavens threatened to fall.

In truth, we had not advanced more than a few paces ere I perceived that all the watches had been doubled.

"What is afire, — the house of the Commandant?" I demanded of one of the sentries.

"No, Monsieur Guyon, it is the small storehouse," he answered; "but, alack, the wind —"

We did not wait to hear more, but hurried down the street of Ste. Anne, guided by the fierce light, which, reflected in the heavens, stained them a deep crimson. It was as if a blood-red cloud hung over the settlement.

Yes, the smaller storehouse was aflame, and about it thronged the settlers, some striving to quench the blaze with buckets of water from the wells, many of the more energetic even attempting to bring it from the river, while others stood despairingly idle, lamenting the quantity of corn and grain (more precious than gold) which was fast being consumed by the fiery cormorant.

Inadequate as were the means of fighting the devouring element, so well did the majority of the men work that, had the night been still, I doubt not they would have been able to keep the destruction from spreading.

But there had been a storm the day before, and a high autumnal wind was blowing from the Lake of the Eries.

From the burning building the flames leaped up in angry defiance of the toil of the workers. Like spirits of Evil, or the furies of the pagan Hades, they flung up their long, cruel arms to the sky, or else, ever stretching out farther and farther, grasped at whatever they could reach, their hot breath a menace of death to those who would restrain them, their touch a seal of ruin and desolation.

Within a few minutes a brand cast high into the air from the caldron of flame fell back upon the larger structure called the King's Storehouse, where was kept the main quantity of grain garnered for the winter.

Here was indeed an appalling misfortune.

How the Commandant, officers, curé, and people toiled to arrest the ruthless havoc which threatened the very existence of Fort Pontchartrain!

Monsieur de Cadillac was here, and there, and everywhere. Father del Halle worked with the strength of a warrior, encouraging his people by his brave hopefulness, his tireless energy, his promptness to see and seize upon any position whence the flames might be fought with the best chance of success.

For me, what I did in the beginning I scarce know, but I trust I was not behind in my duty, and afterwards many spoke of my efforts in terms of praise.

All at once, however, from struggling on with mechanical earnestness, I was recalled to a strange acuteness of all my mental faculties by a cry that went up near me.

"Another fire has started! Now it is the manor! See the smoke issuing from the house of the Commandant!"

Thérèse, — her children, — Barbe!

With a shout I led the way to rescue them.

When called out by the alarm, our *Sieur* had, it seems, enjoined his family to remain within, deeming them safest beneath the shelter of their home roof, for at this time the manor was in no danger from the conflagration.

That this second fire had been kindled separately and was the act of an incendiary, was proved by the blazing mass of straw which we found piled against the walls of the kitchen.

The straw had communicated its flame to the thatch of dried grass, stealing along on the under side so that its ravages had not been apparent until in a light cloud of smoke and flame it broke out above.

"Verily, Madame Cadillac is a most obedient wife to observe the command of her lord to stay at home, even when the rafters are burning over her head," cried *Sans Rémission* in wonder, as we ran forward.

Cadillac was now the first to reach the door.

It was barred, but with the strength of a great dread and excitement he and I together broke it in before the others came up; and as the heavy oaken barrier fell, there poured from the interior a dense volume of blinding smoke.

"Thérèse, Thérèse, Antoine, Jacques!" cried *La Mothe*, in a voice of agony.

There was no response.

Our Sieur wrapped his scarf about his head to escape suffocation, and dashed into the house. Observing the same caution, — for otherwise of what service could we be to those we hoped to save? — I followed him close.

We found Thérèse sunk upon the settle in the salon, her boys beside her. How it happened that she had not made her escape at the first appearance of the fateful cloud, seemed then inexplicable. Afterwards it was most plain. Cadillac caught up his wife, and battling through the smoke, carried her into the open air. I followed with young Antoine; and Frère Constantin, who had pressed in close beside us, brought little Jacques.

No sooner had I transferred the stupefied older boy to Sans Rémission, whom I met as I was coming out, than, having inhaled a good breath of the clear atmosphere, I covered my head again and rushed back into the house, groping my way as best I could toward the rooms farthest from the entrance.

“Barbe! Barbe!” I called. “Barbe!”

Not the faintest sound came in answer, and a great fear for her clutched at my heart. Alas, if I should not be able to find her!

Confused in my dark groping, I was coming back, not knowing which way to turn to seek her, when I tripped over something on the floor.

I fell upon my knees; I felt the fine texture of a woman's dress; my hand touched the soft hair whose ringlets and shining braids, or cadenettes, I knew so well.

Yes, thank God it was Barbe. My soul had cried unto Him, and He had mercifully guided me to where she lay.

There was not a moment to be lost, the flames

broke out around us; she was unconscious; perhaps, after all, I was too late.

Swiftly I raised her in my arms, and essayed to make my way out. The smoke wellnigh overcame me; I stumbled. But—I triumphed over the fury of the element against which I fought.

I approached the door; I staggered on,—beyond the burning ring of the gallery, out upon the green, and gently laid the lifeless form of the young *Châtelaine* of Chateauguay upon the beaver skin which a good woman who had been ministering to the others spread for her upon the grass.

Scarcely had I thus somewhat reluctantly relinquished my precious burden, and as I stood for a moment striving to get the smoke out of my lungs and eyes, a figure brushed past me,—a lithe slight figure shrouded from head to feet in an Indian blanket.

Involuntarily, yet impelled by a potent providence, as I believe, I stretched forth my hand, caught at the cloak, and pulled it away from the visage of the wearer.

As I did so, a low exclamation of astonishment broke from me. The falling back of the mantle revealed the long, plaited black hair of a woman; and the face that looked out at me in malignant hatred was the face of the Indian girl *Ishkodah*.

“Imbecile! Dupe!” she hissed in a venomous whisper that minded me of the old tradition of viper’s honey, and then with a taunting smile slipped away, leaving the cloak in my grasp. Ere I could follow, she had disappeared amid the confusion.

“Ha, ha, my pretty cockatrice, perhaps you know more of the origin of this mysterious fire than others wot of!” I muttered to myself, and would have

cried out to prevent her escape among the throng, but at this moment there was a commotion among the women.

"Madame is dying," wailed the tender-hearted Françoise, my sister's little waiting-maid.

My heart almost ceased to beat. Did they speak of Barbe? I drew near the group, feeling that I must needs challenge and combat with death for her as I had fought with the fire.

"Poor lady, she is breathing her last sigh," continued the affrighted maiden, compassionately.

Miladi lay upon the pelt, her head pillowed upon the breast of an older woman; truly it seemed as if her gentle spirit was about to wing its way to the land of the hereafter, as a white dove soars into the sunlit skies. The woman, who gently chafed the lady's hands and wiped her brow, was not disquieted, however.

"Chut, chut," she said; "Madame le Moyne is not dying; the cool air and the freshness of the wind are quickly reviving her."

Happily it was so; the next moment Barbe opened her sweet eyes. Her glance fell upon me, and she struggled to rise.

"Normand, Normand, I knew you would come," she faltered, as if forsooth no one but I could have rescued her. "And did you save also the little creature who slept outside my door?"

I knelt down beside her.

"What — whom do you mean, dear Barbe?" I inquired anxiously.

"Oh, the poor little child!" she sobbed, and turning away put her hands over her face as though to shut out from her mind the picture that arose before it.

"Madame means the little Pani slave, Jules, who pesters her with his childish affection and is wont to bring his mat of rushes and sleep every night before her door," volunteered Françoise. "The servants are safe; they slept in a separate cabin. I had a bed in a room beyond that of Madame le Moyne. I discovered the fire and, having called to the ladies, rushed out to give the alarm."

All this which I have set down happened quickly. Only three or four minutes had elapsed since I came out of the burning house. There might still be time to succor the boy.

I sprang forward, but some one sought to restrain me.

"Nonsense!" cried a man who himself feared no danger; "nonsense! would you lose your life for the sake of a miserable redskin?"

It was Dugué.

I shook off his grasp; I was determined to make the attempt. But as I broke away from him a woman's cry followed me, —

"Normand! No, no, no! It is too late! Oh, my God, I have sent him to his death!"

It was the voice of Barbe, — Barbe, in an agony of fear for my safety, calling me back. Nevertheless I shut my ears to its pleading, for in my heart still thrilled the words she had uttered a moment before:

"Oh, the poor little child! Oh, the poor little child!"

Like the sweet tones of Frère Constantin's silver altar bell, they reminded me that civilized and savage are alike before the Infinite.

"A life is a life," I said to myself as I sped away. (How much passes in the mind during a few seconds!) "If my friend, if Père Marquette and others have

braved privation, hardship, torture, nay, martyrdom itself to save the souls of dying Indian children, is it not meet that I should do my utmost to snatch from the flames the body of this poor little slave, if yet there be life in it? Have the years I spent with the Recollets, the lessons of self-sacrifice and devotedness that they taught me, been utterly wasted?"

"The small Pani slave," I cried, as I reached the house again, — "he is within;" and I made for the door.

"Hold! it is madness," shouted Cadillac.

Frère Constantin had sunk down on the grass with a broken ankle.

"I must go, not you, Normand," he said.

I thrust him back as he strove to rise. To go in by the main entrance was now impossible; through it the smoke and flame were rolling out in great waves. There was, however, still a chance to reach the interior through a window on the north side, where the fire had not yet made headway.

The shutters were barred; Sans Rémission and others aided me to break them in. As the draught of cold outer air penetrated into the room, a volume of smoke poured forth, driving us back.

"You cannot go in, Monsieur Guyon," declared Sans Rémission; "it is folly to try."

For answer I signed to him to hand me the cloth dripping with water which he had made ready. He did so, and having fastened it over my face I sprang into the burning apartment. The heat was withering; already my throat felt parched and dry, the smoke penetrated into my eyes and ears and nostrils. Should I turn back?

No; beyond was a "poor little child," whom I could not leave to perish.

I crept along the floor where the smoke was less dense; I fell, and for a second must have lost consciousness. Again I revived and dragged myself onward. Was the struggle, was this intense suffering to be all in vain? Alas, I could battle against such fearful odds no longer, my strength was exhausted. With a moan I sank prone on the floor; I stretched out my arms despairingly, thinking my last hour was come. Truly, I believe this would have been my end had not it been decreed otherwise. But when, as though in an appeal to Heaven to witness that I had done my best, I thus flung out my hands, I brought them down upon a small moccasin.

I stretched them farther and grasped a little foot. I had found the child.

The excitement of the discovery renewed my strength. I drew myself along a few paces more, and put an arm around the limp form of the boy; then, holding him fast, I strove to retrace my way across the floor to the window, being guided by the repeated calls of the men without, though I could not reply to them.

At the present, of a truth, I cannot tell how I accomplished the terrible journey. In the end, those who were near the window must have pressed forward and drawn us out.

This is all I know, — I am still alive, and the Pani is alive. And, albeit he long ago received his liberty, he persists in regarding himself as my slave, and as my major-domo here in Louisiana guards my interests like a faithful watch-dog. For the foolish fellow says, to me belongs the life I gave him back by bringing him out of the fire at Fort Pontchartrain.

With the laying of the manor in ashes the disasters of the night were not over. While the house of Ca-

dillac was yet burning, another cry arose; the church was in flames. And scarce had the realization of this catastrophe come home to us, when a blood-curdling whoop resounded above the din and confusion of the scene. The disaffected Indians of the neighborhood had combined to attack us.

"I will go out and bid them disperse; I have ministered to them, they will heed my words," announced Frère Constantin, boldly. "Besides my duty to you, my people, I must do my utmost to save the church."

But, even as he spoke, the pain of his broken ankle caused him to sink down upon the bench outside the barracks, whither I also had been led, weak and dizzy from the smoke of the fire and my late exertions.

Another savage yell rent the air, and a rain of flint-headed arrows pelted against the palisade.

"Pardieu, my good friend, in face of such a storm, how many paces do you think you would get from the fort, though you were as swift as Hermes?" returned Cadillac, grimly. "Rest assured, though your feet were shod with wings and you were gifted with immortality, I would not open the gates for you now, nor for any one, unless it were to admit some unfortunate French settler who found himself on the wrong side of them and yet stood a chance of life, a contingency not probable. As for your hope to dissuade the fiends without from their purpose, they would not listen to a messenger from the skies. You would but throw away your life to no avail."

It was only too evident that the church must burn without a hand being raised to save it.

Our Sieur quickly adopted his plan of defence. So unflagging were his watchfulness and the strictness of the discipline maintained since he had knowl-

edge that the savages were ill disposed toward us, that even during the conflagration the garrison had been kept under arms and ready for the emergency.

Now they received orders not to open fire upon the enemy until the Indians should be close to the palisade.

All at once, however, the sharp crack of a shot from a fusee arose above the whizzing of the arrows.

Cadillac started.

The report was followed by another, and then a third.

"Sacré, who has supplied the red devils with powder and ball?" he exclaimed with fierceness. "There has been treachery within the fort as well as without."

The savages were now close upon us. Clamoring ominously, they beat against the palisades with their battle-axes and strove to force the gates.

The shrieks of the women and children within the enclosure, the spectacle of the burning church now a pillar of flame, the doom that to all appearances awaited the fort and all who were gathered therein, were enough to appall the stoutest heart.

La Mothe remained, notwithstanding, undismayed. His anger died away; with absolute coolness he gave the word to his troops.

A volley of musketry poured down upon the foes now at such short range. Ere they could recover from their surprise, for they thought us unprepared, another volley swept through them with excellent aim, we judged, from the manner of their falling back.

Unaccustomed as they were to the use of firearms, happily, their fusees sometimes failed them, whereas

even their terrible arrows were ineffective before the deadly bullets of our soldiery.

They renewed the attack again and again, each time with a more desperate fury. Had the Hurons and Outawas of the surrounding villages joined these disaffected Pottawatomies, doubtless the fate of Le Détroit would have been sealed.

But those strange neighbors remained passive and indifferent; during the conflagration that had dyed the heaven with blood, during the pandemonium of the attack upon us by their red brothers, their forts showed not a light.

The strength of the savage besiegers was broken. Our soldiers still kept up a brisk peppering with their muskets, and in the streets of the little town the women and children knelt and prayed.

Frère Constantin, despite his disabled foot, dragged himself about, sustaining the courage of the men; and though an arrow grazed his hair, he was not in the least perturbed. "He should have been a soldier," I said to myself; yet, after all, did not his calling demand as great valor as that of the bravest warrior?

With the fine firelock I had brought from France, I blazed away at the r dskins as persistently as any of the men.

At length, finding themselves worsted, they turned and fled to the woods; they had counted upon taking us unawares; instead, we repelled and put them to rout.

Our shout of triumph caused the forest to ring again and again, and was a taunt in their ears as they ran, — those who were left of them. As a precaution against their return in greater numbers, Cadillac kept the men still at their posts.

It was broad day ere he permitted the gates to be opened and the wounded brought in as captives.

Among the prisoners was the Chief Osawwanemekee, Yellow Thunder, who, being slightly disabled, had been abandoned on the field.

"You are Osawwanemekee?" questioned De la Mothe when the warrior was led before him.

The Yellow Thunder sadly bowed his head.

"I am Osawwanemekee," he replied haltingly. "If you will provide me a faithful interpreter, I will tell you whatever I know that may be of service to you; my people abandoned me, I will have vengeance upon them."

De Lorme was accordingly called, and through him the Commandant addressed the old chief as follows :—

"Yellow Thunder," he inquired with frowning sternness, "how is it that you have forgotten the obedience you pledged to Onontio, your great father at Quebec, by many necklaces; that you have forgotten the branch of porcelain you brought to me as a peace offering not long since? Had you no pity upon the women and children of your tribe? Now your life is in my hands; your furs must be given up to me; your children shall not have so much as a bone to gnaw."

"My father," began the wily Osawwanemekee, "I am so filled with shame, I know not if I shall have strength to speak to you. Have pity on me, my father, for I am in despair at the bad conduct which I have committed. I have risked everything, but I will die by the hand of my father. My people have fled from his anger, and from the anger of Onontio. They abandoned me because I am old, but I will show them I am not too old to take vengeance. I

will tell my father everything. Let him seek out and punish those who have offered him necklaces with one hand and drawn them back with the other.

"Know then, my father, this attack on the fort of our white brothers was long planned.

"But our great chief Mawkwa, the Bear, needed an ally inside the fort, for the palisades are firm as the trees of the forest, and the gates are strong. Some one the warriors needed to create a confusion like the dicing of Yen-ad-dizee, the Storm Gambler, within the fort, and then when this conflict should be at its height to open the gates to us."

Cadillac fixed the eye of the savage in fierce warning.

"Osawwanemekee," he said, "if you tell not the truth, and the whole truth, I will have you torn limb from limb, and your body I will deliver over to be burned."

"My father, I will tell you the truth," answered the Yellow Thunder.

"There are those, my father, who wished to take me by the end of the finger, those that you have held by the hand. They would not open the gates, indeed, but they were not angry because we wished to open the gates. Yet were they minded to put our warriors off for a while. Our warriors would not be put off. They found some one to do their bidding. A daughter of the forest had given her heart to the white chief of the sure aim (Dugué). But the white chief scorned her for the sake of the woman whose cheek is like the red and white of the blossoms in the 'Moon of Flowers.'"

"The forest maid was Ishkodah," I muttered under my breath.

"Ishkodah, the Fury," repeated Osawwanemekee, albeit my lips had scarce framed the name.

"The maid tried to win the heart of the Frenchman by witchcraft; her spells were in vain; the white woman was a greater enchantress than she. Ishkodah resolved to take revenge on the woman. She invoked the Red Dwarf; she came to a Medicine Man of the tribe, and telling him her story, asked what she should do to be rid of the flower-faced woman with shining hair. The Medicine Man was in the counsels of the warriors. He put her off, saying he would consult his Manitou. He told the braves what he had learned, and they commanded him to bid Ishkodah set fire to the fort.

"But with this alone 'The Fury,' was not satisfied; the woman with hair like the silk of the maize might escape. The Medicine Man knew Ishkodah often went to the kitchens of the white men's lodges with berries and plums for their women. He gave her a powder made from the leaves of the poison blossom, and bade her spill it in the dish of sweetmeats the Pani woman is wont to prepare for the table of my father, — a strange powder that causes heavy sleep. The fair-faced woman with shining hair would taste of the sweetmeats, she would sleep; her beautiful body would be consumed in the fire, her soul be carried off by the Blue Spirits of jealousy who came to the aid of the daughter of the forest."

"Fiend!" cried Cadillac, springing up when this speech had been interpreted to him. "So this infernal Red Dwarf is one of your Medicine Men?"

"The Red Dwarf is the Demon of the Strait," rejoined Osawwanemekee, imperturbably.

Cadillac broke into a harsh laugh.

"Chacornacle, have search made again for this

Nain Rouge. We will show the savages promptly that he is no more than human," he said. "Ma foi, if he is so great a curiosity, I will send him as a present to Onontio. Perhaps he may stir up troubles among my enemies at Quebec which will prevent them from meddling with me and my affairs here. As for this girl, see that she be apprehended with all speed. She shall be flayed alive! She shall be consigned to the stake and suffer worse tortures than those she designed for Madame de Chateauguay, since she shall have no soporific to deaden them. A fury indeed she is, thus to seek to destroy a lovely lady who never knowingly did harm to her nor to any one. A fury! she would have made my wife and children her victims as well! And —"

La Mothe stopped short; the extent of the plot was truly appalling.

"Yes, my father," proceeded the chief, reading his thoughts; "the braves whispered together. 'Our father too will fall under the power of the dream blossom,' they said; 'he will be heavy with sleep, and cannot order the French soldiers when we come down upon them.'"

"And providentially, I supped last night with Frère Constantin and you, Normand," murmured my brother, in an aside to me.

Then, turning toward Yellow Thunder, he continued: "You see, Osawwanemekee, the great Manitou of whom Father Constantin has told you guards and protects me. The charms and herbs of your Medicine Men are powerless against me. They could not harm the fair-faced women of our fort, because the hearts of these women are white as the snows of the wilderness in winter, not black with hatred, like to a nest of serpents in a noisome hole of the

fens, such as is the heart of this girl. Chacornacle, have search made for her at once; she must be still in hiding within the fort, for how could she escape?"

"You may search, my father, but you will not find her," interposed Osawwanemekee, divining the orders of Cadillac from his gestures. "The Bright Bird does not stay to be captured; it flies away over the woods; it will mate in another country. There is a young warrior who loves the beautiful Fury. He liked not the love glances she cast at the Frenchman. He has taken her away; he would kill her rather than let her return to look upon this white chief again."

Thus was the plot laid bare. There could be no doubt that Monsieur de Tonty, if not directly implicated, yet was not averse to any uprising of the Indians which would cause the ruin of the post. True, it is probable he was anxious to stave off the attack until the spring, when his wife and children would be on their way to Montreal, whither he intended to send them for a time. And assuredly he did not design the destruction of his own house, which was burned to the ground as well as the manor of Cadillac, the residence of the curé, and the church.

But he had allowed the Indians to perceive his disaffection toward our Sieur, and they had counted for success upon this lack of cordial relations between the Commandant and his captain.

As for the Indian maiden, we found no trace of the handsome but malicious Ishkodah. It was afterwards reported that having been carried away beyond the woods by the brave to whom her people had married her, she fled from him, and cast herself into

the Lake of Otsiekitah.¹ 'Tis said that from the depths of these placid waters may still be heard, on autumnal evenings, the sad voice of the unhappy daughter of the forest, by turns wailing, despairing, or repentant ; and the answering lament of her Indian lover from the shore.

¹ Ste. Claire.

CHAPTER NINETEENTH

OUR PRETTY COMMISSIONERS

THE red men had attacked us, and they had been driven back. Above the bastions of Fort Pontchartrain the fleur-de-lis still waved, and the little colony of Le Détroit, far from being annihilated, was already planning to extend its boundaries.

It is true Mesdames Cadillac and De Tonty and the Châtelaine of Chateauguay, left without shelter by the incendiary fire, were compelled to spend the winter in huts scarce better than the lodges of our Huron neighbors; but this they endured without complaint. Our Sieur designed to build in the spring a manor more imposing than the first; De Tonty too was to erect a larger house, and the new church and a residence for Frère Constantin were to be upon a more extensive scale than the structures that had been destroyed.

One afternoon at the beginning of the Moon of Beavers, while on a stroll through the settlement, I chanced to find myself upon a secluded path that lay behind the storehouses, which were already rebuilt in a temporary fashion.

As I passed a cabin that had remained a ruin since the fire, I noted there was water in the cellar and, peering into the stagnant pool, caught a glimpse of a furry object which I took to be the yellow gray breast of a wolf.

"If it is a whelp, I will tame it as a present for Miladi Barbe; if an old one, still I will take it alive if possible," I soliloquized, as rapier in hand I entered the cellar. 'Twas as well to be on guard against a sudden spring from the creature, should it prove so ferocious as to be unmanageable otherwise.

Ha, ha, ha, it moves me to mirth to think of the adventure, and of the jest upon myself. The furry animal stirred not, and concluding it must be dead, I poked it with the end of my blade. Chut, how I had been fooled! Miladi would not have for a plaything a cub of this breed; it was not a thing of flesh and blood at all that I fished out of the water on the point of my sword.

It was a beaver skin, and bore the mark of the company, together with the number 229. I found another also, like to the first. They were not spoiled by the water, and the discovery of them in so strange a place convinced me that the storehouse had been robbed.

Accordingly I availed myself of a pretext to go there, and quietly made an examination. The result was, — I reported the matter to our Sieur.

"It is as I anticipated," he said, to my surprise, and presently proceeded to give me further instructions.

The river being still open and free of ice save at the margins, that evening, with Jolicœur and two other soldiers, I crossed it in a canoe. The night was dark, and the paddles of our Indian boatman scarce made a sound as our craft of cedar bark shot swiftly across the current of the strait. We landed in silence, yet the savages, ever on the watch, knew of our coming ere we stepped ashore, and at the entrance to their village we were met by the chief Quarante Sols, in a quarrelsome mood.

"If you are come upon a peace errand, where is your necklace of wampum?" he demanded suddenly.

"Quarante Sols," I said with sternness, "you know the French have no need to give branches of porcelain as pledges that they mean to keep faith. It is only the false Indian who must give them, else he will not be believed. The word of your Father Monsieur de Cadillac is worth many branches of porcelain, and as binding as many necklaces. When I tell you, in his name, we are come with no evil intent to you, this should suffice. If you seek to prevent us from carrying out the orders of your Father Monsieur de Cadillac, he will think you have a part in the crime he would unearth, and you will share the punishment of the other wrongdoers."

The warning had its effect; the attitude of Quarante Sols from defiance, nay, even menace, changed to a surly acquiescence. All the braves of the village had gathered about him, glowering upon us in a manner that augured that we might resign ourselves to a speedy despatch to the better world if the chief gave the sign to his followers.

Afterwards Jolicœur averred that my boldness had much to do with saving us; but I scarce thought of our danger, being intent on the mission on which we were sent.

Waving back his warriors with the majesty of a prince, Quarante Sols now asked in a more conciliatory tone what we would have of him.

I explained our errand.

"Chief of the Swan's Quill, you who send the words of my Father Monsieur de Cadillac across the seas," he made answer, "neither Quarante Sols nor his people have to do with this wrong whereof

you speak. They will not cross the will of their Father. Go, do his bidding in the matter."

Without hindrance, therefore, we proceeded on our way until we reached the farther extremity of the settlement. Here was a hut that had apparently been abandoned by some Huron for a more commodious lodge. Into it we would have plunged, but at the moment there rose up before us a man whom, even in the semi-darkness, we recognized as not an Indian.

The light of a pine torch which one of our soldiers quickly flashed upon him showed him to be a servant of the commissioner Arnaud. Seeing that resistance was useless, he surrendered himself a prisoner, and acknowledged that he was there by command of his master.

In the hut we found a great quantity of beaver pelts which we brought back with us. Thus we had done a good night's work.

On our return I presented myself before our Sieur.

"Monsieur de la Mothe," I said, "I have the honor to report to you that in the Huron village we found nineteen packs of fine otter and beaver skins, concealed by the commissioners Arnaud and Nolan."

"They are most audacious; I did not expect so much from there," he exclaimed. "In truth, Normand, after you were gone, I regretted sending you upon so hazardous an expedition."

"Tée, I had no fear of the Indians," I cried. "I have never done aught against them, and have been much among them with Frère Constantin. Moreover, do they not always hold in respect those who maintain toward them a confident bearing?"

La Mothe sighed. "Sometimes I think the good

Recollet over-rash," he said musingly. "It is not always safe even for a saint to thrust his head into the lion's jaws."

"Who would injure Monsieur del Halle?" I protested lightly. "Why, the fiercest warriors become with him as docile as children; and he is as devoted to the interests of his savage neophytes as to the French at the fort. But as to these dishonest commissioners, surely they will need all their influence with the powers that be when their peculations become known!"

My brother laughed sardonically.

"This is by no means the limit of their stealings," he declared. "They have defrauded the company of furs to the value of fourteen thousand francs. They have relatives among the directors of the company, but this fact shall not save them. It is my duty to report the matter to Ville Marie and to demand their recall. To-morrow morning you shall write out the letters according to my dictation."

After much delay, Arnaud and Nolan were summoned to Montreal, and Radisson was instructed to follow them upon the arrival of the successors of the three.

The Moon of Flowers was come. My sister Madame Cadillac with her young son Jacques and the little infant Thérèse, born in the Moon of Snows, was to go to Quebec upon a visit to her older daughters at the Ursulines. The Châtelaine of Chateauguay was, of course, to accompany her. But ere they left for the St. Lawrence, Miladi Barbe, perchance for old time's sake, went a-maying with me upon the prairie of Le Détroit.

Never were the waters of the strait of so fair a

blue as upon that morning. From the woods came the fragrance of the wild honeysuckle, the arbutus, and fleurs-de-lis; the green banks of the river were dotted with violets and boutons d'or (buttercups); the skies were serene, and here and there across their azure meadows strayed fleecy white clouds, like flocks of sheep driven by the gentle shepherdess the South Wind, with a sunbeam for her crook.

The prairie was gay with the songs of the meadow-lark and the robin, the brown thrush and the bobolink. The wild pigeons of the woods were so numerous that any evening after sunset I could have knocked hundreds of them off the low branches of the trees with the back of my blade; the wild geese returning from the south flew so low over the settlement that their notes could be distinctly heard. The deer too ventured from their haunts in the depths of the forest, to gaze at us in gentle wonder.

Ah, that day of days, when I sought to beguile the time for Miladi by tales of Indian romance I had learned at Michilimackinac!

Barbe was in a gay and captivating mood. Nevertheless, perchance because of Ishkodah, she lent but an inattentive ear to my description of the beauty of dusky maidens, and was bent upon bantering me anew my old fancy for her friend Madeleine de Verchères, who was still unwed.

This I relished not, and, abandoning these jesting themes, I fell into an earnest tone. But, sacré! at this moment, who should cross our path but Dugué? In his hand he swung a spray of budding eglantine which he must needs present to the young Châtelaine of Chateauguay with many compliments, the which she, capricious beauty, made no attempt to cut short.

The sun-dial records only sunlit hours. Miladi

Barbe and Madame Cadillac went up to Quebec. From the hand of fate the sorceress of the Château St. Louis had read darker days for our Sieur, and these were fast approaching.

By the first summer convoy from Montreal came the company's three new commissioners. To my surprise, Monsieur de Radisson was not at the landing-place of the canoes to greet these officials, but, at the request of De la Mothe, I went thither to extend to them the civilities of the Commandant.

As their chief stepped ashore, so ludicrous was his appearance, I with difficulty preserved my gravity, being near to laughing in his face. He was a slight, effeminate-looking man, attired in the height of the fashion as they knew it in New France; his eyebrows were of a reddish color, and I surmised that beneath his fine peruque was a plentiful shock of tawny hair. He had not spoken many words, however, ere I judged that under his drawling tone there lurked a shrewdness like to let no chance escape which might be turned to his own advantage, and his sharp ferret eyes lost nothing of what took place around him. These last observations I made a little later.

As he came up the beach, I met him with a courteous salutation.

"Monsieur le Noyer?" I said; and for my life I could not help that into my voice crept a note of interrogation, so amusing was his self-satisfaction and conceit, as though the whole world must at a glance know him to be some great personage.

"Yes, of course I am Monsieur le Noyer," he replied. "But," he stopped short, looked me over from head to feet, and then added insolently, — "But who, may I ask, are you, monsieur?"

"I am a gentleman, deputed by Monsieur de Cadillac to receive a gentleman who was expected by this convoy. If no *gentleman* has arrived, I am released from my commission," I answered with haughtiness.

"Phouff! How hot-headed are you officers here! Believe me, in Montreal such testiness is no longer the mode," he returned in a deprecating manner. "Eh bien, I am Monsieur le Noyer, the chief commissioner for Le Détroit; and since I bring letters to your Commandant, Monsieur de la Mothe, I trust I may have the pleasure of meeting him as soon as may be."

"The Sieur Cadillac has requested me to invite you to breakfast," I replied with more amenity. "Permit me to conduct you to the new manor, some rooms of which are ready for occupancy."

The little man concluded to unbend a degree of his dignity. Doubtless in his self-complacency, he had expected my brother to be on the strand to welcome him; but the hospitable invitation of our Sieur restored his good humor for the time.

Monsieur de Cadillac received him with much courtesy in the salon of the manor, where upon a table laid with snowy damask and such silver plate as had been saved from the fire were set forth the best of meats, and bread, and wine that the post afforded.

Monsieur le Noyer presented his letters, and then De la Mothe, after an interchange of compliments with the stranger, said, glancing at the bulky proportions of the packet he still held in his hand, —

"I ask your pardon, Monsieur le Noyer; I am a prompt man by nature and by habit. In this packet no doubt are instructions that require immediate

consideration. You will hold me excused if I withdraw to read these documents. Monsieur Guyon will ably fill the rôle of dispenser of the best hospitality my poor house affords. Au revoir. Were it not that I must give my attention to the letters, I should ask no greater pleasure than to spend the remainder of the day in listening to your news of the doings in Montreal, and making inquiry for my friends in that good town of the King."

Therewith he retired to examine the budget.

Whether Le Noyer had assumed the breakfast to be a formal feast prepared in his honor, to which all the gentlemen of the post would be invited, I do not know. At all events, though I strove to my utmost to play well the part of entertainer which was assigned me, the guest grew sullen and silent. Yet his ill-humor in no way interfered with his relish of the viands, or so it seemed.

I ate more sparingly, but was ready to lengthen out the repast, esteeming it easier to cater to the palate of the gourmet than to divert him with conversation.

Within the hour our *Sieur* returned. We were just risen from the table, and Monsieur le Noyer had gone to a window and was looking out upon the river, that lay, a fair expanse of blue and silver, shining in the sunlight of this perfect day in June.

"Monsieur le Commissaire," began Cadillac, in his courtliest tone, "I dare say you are eager to be about the affairs of the company. I will not detain you from them, therefore. Be assured you shall have all the protection you may need from me as Commandant of this post, in the discharge of your duties. I would advise you to execute as quietly as possible any orders wherewith you may be charged.

Monsieur Guyon will give you whatever information you may require regarding our treatment of the savages."

"Thanks, Monsieur le Commandant," returned his guest, with ill-concealed impatience. "I have need to ask no information, save to be shown the way to the house of the retiring commissioner. I marvel he has not come to greet me."

"Of Monsieur Radisson's acts I can make no explanation, not being on terms of amity with him. I am sure, however, that Monsieur Guyon will be happy to conduct you to his house."

My brother glanced at me, a flash of amusement in his eye, for he knew I would be gladly rid of the duty of host.

"Monsieur," I said, turning to his guest with a grave bow, "I shall be pleased to do you a service."

Accordingly we went out together, and down the street of Ste. Anne, toward the dwelling of Monsieur de Radisson.

"I presume my predecessor in office is ready to deliver over to me at once the keys of the company's storehouse," remarked the little commissioner pompously, as we proceeded; despite his announcement that he wanted to be told nothing, here he was immediately questioning me.

From his manner one would have thought he had been appointed Commandant of Le Détroit, at least, and I laughed in my sleeve as I answered, —

"No doubt Monsieur Radisson is prepared to give into your hands whatever insignia of office he may possess. It may be well for you to understand before meeting him that the storehouses have keys indeed, yet they are never locked, excepting only

the cellars, where are stored the casks of brandy. The Indians have never seen seals placed upon coffers nor caskets, nor even upon the doors of the buildings; neither has a guard been placed there. They would consider such locks or seals an infringement upon the liberty which is so precious among these nations."

"What, what, what!" exclaimed the new commissioner. "The company's goods are not kept under lock? This is laxity, indeed! Of a truth, we must change matters."

"If you make the attempt to do so, you will incur the enmity of the savages," I curtly responded. "Their likes and dislikes turn as a pair of scales, according as they have free range or are watched in their visits to even our dwellings. They come and go as they please, and, although persistent beggars of gifts from their white brothers, they have never stolen from our stores; they hold the goods of another sacred."

"Ah, ha, ha! trust an Indian, never unless he be a dead one," laughed Le Noyer, boisterously. "No, no, rest assured I shall lock up the storehouses. And these lazy red dogs, what need is there to curry favor with them by presents? Let them fish and hunt, and buy what they require of the company at a good profit to the directors. I shall not waste the company's goods in presents."

"Give to the birds crumbs, God gives you loaves," I rejoined absently.

"A Recollet saying, I am willing to wager, a maxim of the Saint of Assisi," broke out Le Noyer, clapping me on the shoulder, and shouting hilariously, as though he found in my words much wit, "I have heard, Monsieur Guyon, that you were once

minded to join the good Fathers, and they would not have you. I'll venture you are clerk to the curé here, as well as to the Commandant. Howbeit, let me tell you, in future any birds that come thus for grain to the company's granary are like to be caught in a snare."

"Save only the birds of prey that feather their nests therein," I made answer scornfully. "Here we are at the house of Monsieur Radisson, and now, monsieur, I have the honor to wish you good-day."

He laughed again, and I stalked away, angered at myself for having come so near to quarrelling with him, since this would be to act contrary to the interests of our Sieur. Yet his consequential air was most irritating, and his rude jest was more than I could tamely hear.

Monsieur le Noyer lost no time ere he put into effect the policy he was resolved to adopt in trading with the savages. He and his colleagues promptly told the Indians through an interpreter that they had come to send away the furs, not to bring any more merchandise. Moreover, they locked the store-houses, and set an exorbitant price upon the goods of the company.

The result was that within three days after their arrival a delegation of savages came to the fort and demanded the resignation of the new commissioner by the presentation of a necklace.

La Mothe, hoping to pacify them, begged of him to pay no heed to their request; but Le Noyer in a rage accepted the token.

"Of a truth, I should die of ennui in this wilderness," he averred passionately; "with joy will I return to Montreal."

Giving over his papers to his colleagues, he was hot to depart as speedily as might be.

A day or two later our Sieur and I came upon the ex-commissioner as he stood on the strand directing the lading of a canoe for the voyage.

"How now, monsieur?" inquired the Commandant, justly indignant that these preparations were begun without his knowledge; "what is the meaning of this?"

"It means," responded Le Noyer, surlily, "that I shall remain no longer in this place, where I have been treated with scant courtesy."

"When courtesy is all on one side, it cannot last long," answered La Mothe; "trouble not yourself over-much with plans for an early departure, monsieur, since you are not to go at present."

Le Noyer grew red in the face and swelled with choler, as does the wild turkey when enraged.

"Monsieur de Cadillac," he cried, catching at his rapier, "I would remind you I am chief commissioner of the Company of New France at this post."

My brother laughed in his sarcastic fashion.

"Not so fast, and have a care, for if you should draw your sword you would complete your own undoing, Monsieur le Noyer," he said. "You *were* chief commissioner, but I will recall to your memory that you have resigned your authority."

"But — but —" stammered the other.

"Nevertheless," continued Cadillac, now cool and inflexible, "were you still in possession of the privileges deputed to you when you came hither, were you the embodiment of the fulsome powers of the company itself, they would avail you nothing in this matter. You are not to depart until the demand of the Indians for your resignation has been submitted

to the company and I have received instructions from them as to whether it is to be accepted."

"And who or what shall detain me since I am resolved to go?" queried Le Noyer, with haughtiness.

"You are not to set out because I will not permit it, monsieur."

"You, Monsieur de Cadillac," repeated the ex-commissioner. "I owe *you* no obedience."

"Pardon, monsieur," answered our Sieur, with ironical politeness, "either you have been ill-instructed or you are wilfully insubordinate. Every one at Fort Pontchartrain owes obedience to the Commandant, and it is a standing order that no one shall leave the post without my permission. See that you do not disobey it. Any further insubordination on your part will be strenuously dealt with. My powers are ample; they give me authority to punish, according to circumstance, by reprimand, arrest, imprisonment, suspension, or, in case of a clear and positive disobedience of orders, to run my sword through the body of the offender. Therefore be warned."

With these words Cadillac passed on down the street of St. Louis, and I followed, leaving the disgraced commissioner in an unavailing fury.

Thereafter he retired in high dudgeon to his lodgings, and for the nonce our Sieur saw no more of him.

CHAPTER TWENTIETH

THE LODESTONE OF LOVE

ERE the end of the week a tragic incident brought consternation to our little town of Le Détroit, and caused the hearts of the bravest among our small garrison to quail at the thought that the like might be the fate of any one of them.

One afternoon, as I passed through the gate, I was met by Sergeant Jean Joly. His usually jovial countenance wore a troubled air, and his manner was grave and testy, as though he had a load on his mind.

"What has gone wrong, Jolicœur?" I asked in surprise, so seldom was his good humor ruffled.

"In faith, Monsieur Guyon, I have cause enough for despondency," he replied, "and, since two heads are better than one, perhaps you will give me your counsel. On the one hand, I am loath to bring punishment upon the poor lad; on the other, I can no longer neglect to report the matter."

"You speak in enigmas," I protested.

"Here it is, then," he went on. "The soldier La Giroflé disappeared this morning. You know, having been unsuccessful in his efforts to win for a wife the pretty waiting-maid of Madame Cadillac, he is minded to wed the Indian maiden Mekaia, the Star-flower. Father Constantin promised to marry them next Sunday. Well, when to-day the reckless fellow was missing, I bethought me he had slipped away

to see his sweetheart, and 't would be only a matter of some hours in the guard-house. He has not returned, and the girl brought berries into the settlement to sell, this afternoon. She had hoped to meet the soldier, and had no knowledge of his whereabouts. Others have deserted, but he would scarce be like to run away."

"Many a man has felt like running away on the eve of his marriage, Jolicœur," I hazarded.

The bluff sergeant laughed at the jest, but anon shook his head sadly.

"I fear me the lad has been foully dealt with," he muttered.

"You have no choice but to make known his disappearance, that search may be made," I said with decision. "His failure to return may mean that the savages are planning another attack upon the fort."

"So I think, and I will delay no longer," answered Jolicœur.

The absence of La Giroflé was accordingly reported forthwith.

"If the churl turns up safe, as God grant he may, I will have him in irons for a month," declared La Mothe. "Jean Joly, take two men and go in search of him."

By dusk the party returned, and appeared before the Commandant, who had called together his officers, anticipating ill tidings.

"Well," demanded Monsieur de Cadillac, as Jolicœur and his men saluted.

"Mon Commandant," began the sergeant, his honest face working with emotion, "we have found proof that the soldier La Giroflé was tortured and burned to death by the savages. About a league from here through the forest, we came upon a

cleared space where a band of red men had evidently but a few hours before held one of their terrible ceremonies. On the edge of the circle we found this." Thereupon he drew from the breast of his coat a fragment of a soldier's uniform, and laid it on the table before the Commandant. "In the centre of the ring was a stake; near it were a few charred bones and a heap of ashes among which, here and there, a spark still glowed. That was all."

Honest Jolicœur, rough and stern as he was at times, now drew a hand across his eyes. His voice had grown husky, and towards the last of his recital the words had come brokenly from his lips.

"Our Indian guides told us this was the act of strangers, Outawas from the North who have been lurking in the neighborhood of late," he added after a pause.

For me, I must acknowledge that my blood ran cold, but it was with horror, not fear. A wild eagerness to overtake these redskins who had done this terrible deed took possession of me; a fierce anxiety to hew them down with as little mercy as they had shown to our poor La Giroflé; to torture and maim and slaughter them, as they had tortured and maimed and slaughtered; to hurl them into the depths of the Inferno!

I glanced around, and saw similar emotion depicted upon the countenances of the officers about me, while the hand of every one grasped the hilt of his sword.

The frown upon the brow of our *Sieur* was ominous as a thunder-cloud.

"These red demons have killed a soldier of the King," he exclaimed; "verily, the crime shall be well avenged."

Scarce had he ceased to speak when into the room strode the Miami chief, Wingeezee, the Eagle,

a commanding figure, wearing with the air of a prince his blanket of saffron color, in his hair three eagle's feathers, and upon his feet moccasins bright with porcupine quills.

"My Father," he said, addressing the Commandant, for he knew enough of our language and we of the Miami tongue to make the sense of his words intelligible, with the help now and then of the interpreter De Lorme,— "My Father, the Indians of Le Détroit mourn for their white brother, and would join in avenging his fate. Let my Father but lift his hand as a sign that it is his wish, and we will send into the forest a hundred braves, to pursue and bring to vengeance the enemies who have put to death the soldier of my Father, the soldier of the Greatest of all Onontios, who lives beyond the Wide Waters."

When the chief had concluded, Cadillac rose to his feet.

"Wingeezee," he began with formality, "I thank you; your people do well to offer me aid at this time. My vengeance upon those who have killed this soldier must indeed be swift. The wrath of Onontio at Quebec, of the Great Onontio beyond the Mighty Waters, will be terrible when they hear of this act of our enemies. I accept your offer, knowing that you and the other warriors make it with a good heart. When daylight comes again, go therefore with your braves; pursue these treacherous Outawas, and wipe them out of existence."

"It shall be done," replied the Eagle. "But, my Father, give us three or four Frenchmen to go with us, that these northern Outawas may know we are come to avenge the death of the soldier, not to make war for ourselves."

The demand was an unwelcome one. Eager to go

as was every officer and soldier of the fort, with our ill-paid garrison reduced by desertion and expiration of their term of service to the paltry number of fourteen, not a man could be spared.

I started forward.

"Let me go," I pleaded.

Mon chevalier waved me back.

"No," he said curtly.

He had, however, decided what to do. The voyageurs and coureurs de bois who as servants of the company enjoyed the protection of the fort, had been put through military drill; of their service he would now avail.

Therefore, concealing his momentary reluctance from the Indian, he answered,—

"Wingeezee, you ask but what is just. When daylight comes again, and your braves are ready to set out, I will send with you eight good Frenchmen."

Forthwith the chief stalked away, to take back the message to the warriors who awaited him. When he was gone, De la Mothe turned to the captain.

"Monsieur de Tonty," he directed, "assemble the temporary servants of the company and call for volunteers; of these volunteers select eight good men and give them food and ammunition from the storehouse of the company, as is customary whenever their services are required in the cause of the King. The expedition must start at dawn."

An hour or two later, while our Sieur was dictating to me an account of the sad occurrence to be sent to Quebec, and I was taking it down as fast as might be, Monsieur de Tonty returned.

"Monsieur le Commandant," he began, "I have to report that according to your orders, I called for volunteers from among the servants of the company.

Some twenty men responded, and of these I selected eight."

Cadillac nodded his approval.

"And they hold themselves in readiness to start at daylight," he said.

"They are willing to set out, Monsieur le Commandant, but there is a difficulty."

La Mothe shot a keen glance at his captain.

"Monsieur le Noyer maintains that the people of the company cannot be drafted, even for the service of the King, without his permission," continued De Tonty, uneasily. "He forbids them to go a step from the fort without his leave, and says he is not decided that he will grant it."

I would have marvelled at my brother's coolness under such irritation, had I not often observed before that in critical situations his anger was not wont to break forth in a flame, as at other times, but was rather like the smouldering fire of a furnace.

"And what is your opinion of this position taken by Monsieur le Noyer?" he inquired.

"I—I—do not see how the men can be ordered out against the will of the commissioners," hesitated De Tonty, half-heartedly.

"I will show you how it is to be done, then, monsieur," returned Cadillac, with a sneer. "Have the men prepared to go, and tell Le Noyer I require his presence."

To this summons the ex-commissioner responded with an exceeding ill-grace, sauntering in from his dinner, flushed with wine and in disordered dress.

"Monsieur le Noyer," said the Commandant, "do you assert that I am not empowered to draft the servants of the company for the service of the King without your permission?"

"Of a surety; I declare that you have no such power," averred the arrogant knave, looking toward De Tonty.

The latter avoided his eye, but the manifest sympathy between them did not escape our Sieur.

"Oh, ho, monsieur, had you a hundred allies here, your temerity should not go unrebuked," he said sarcastically. "I will teach you to mend your conduct, my little commissioner! You have neglected your own duty to act the seditious, and have attempted to alienate others from their obedience. For this insolence and insubordination you will consider yourself under arrest and will pass the next three hours in the sergeant's room. You may retire; Jean Joly, look to the execution of the order."

At daybreak the expedition set out; the wandering Outawas were overtaken, and the fate of poor La Giroflé was avenged so promptly that the anticipated attack upon the fort was averted.

The sullen Le Noyer, however, instead of thanking Heaven that by the determined course of our Sieur we were saved from an imminent danger, and perhaps thus his own precious life had been spared, must needs consider himself more deeply wronged.

I have before set down that sometimes, when vexed with care, it was the wont of La Mothe to walk by the river, when all but the watches of the fort were asleep, save only myself also, who frequently bore him company. One night, when we thus paced the bank at the edge of the King's Garden, there was wafted to us on the breeze, from the sands below, the murmur of voices, although the speakers seemed to avoid a loud tone.

"What is this?" exclaimed my brother, stopping short.

"Two or more settlers, who having gone a-fishing with a wine-jug, find themselves belated outside the palisade," I rejoined.

"No, those are not the accents of wine-bibbers," answered Cadillac; "there is plotting abroad."

Through the darkness we followed the sounds, and thus came suddenly upon some six or more of the company's voyageurs, who were manifestly making preparations to leave the fort.

The commissioner's canoe was already in the water and well stocked with provisions.

"What, ho, varlets!" cried Cadillac, lustily. "Do you want to be shot as rebels, or hanged as breakers of the law; to have your heads placed upon pikes at the gates of the palisade?"

Emerging as he did out of the blackness of the night, our *Sieur* must, indeed, have seemed to the men an apparition sent to strike them down in their wrongdoing, and they were scarce less appalled, I thought, than had it been so, when they found themselves confronted with the Commandant in the flesh.

"Pardon, monseigneur!" implored the captain of the crew, falling upon his knees in abject terror, his example being quickly followed by his mates. "Grace and pardon! We were only carrying out the order of our masters the commissioners. Grace and pardon! We are between two fires; as servants of the company, we are sworn to obey its officers under penalty of punishment by the civil law of Montreal. We mean no disrespect to the authority of Monsieur le Commandant; but what are we to do?"

"The poor knaves are in truth hard pressed," I muttered aside to La Mothe; "I pray you be merciful."

"If you do not wish to be instantly flogged," said Cadillac, keeping the man on his knees, "make a clean breast of this matter without delay. By whose order has this boat been provisioned and manned?"

"By the command of Monsieur le Noyer and the other commissioners, gracious Sieur," replied the fellow, glibly enough.

"He was to meet us here, and embark with us by two of the clock," interposed another as eager for clemency.

The villains could have overpowered and murdered us; yet, despite the fact that many nearer to Cadillac's own rank in life conspired against him, such was the awe he inspired that never did his own men or others, such as these, raise a hand to injure him.

Putting a silver whistle to his lips, he now summoned the guards, and gave the men into their custody.

Before the prisoners were marched away, however, he said to them, —

"My men, your base offence merits capital punishment; but since you were not altogether masters of your own actions, I commute the penalty to fine and imprisonment. See that you do not offend again."

As for Monsieur le Noyer, when he came down to embark at two of the clock, he walked into the arms of Jolicœur, and suffered another imprisonment, together with his fellow commissioners, they having connived at his insubordination.

A few weeks later, Cadillac received word from the company to send Le Noyer to Montreal, which he did forthwith. Le Détroit was as well rid of the little commissioner as it had been of Arnaud and Nolan.

These three pretty scoundrels, nevertheless,

promptly set their wits to work to be revenged upon the Commandant for his discovery of their villany.

One day De la Mothe sat at his writing-table in the salon of his new manor, scratching away with his quill, wherewith he had such unusual facility as a soldier, and I was engaged in making copies of the letters he had already prepared, as was my wont.

Because of the pleasantness of the air, the door leading out upon the gallery was left open, and several times, as I raised my eyes, I noted a long, slanting ray of sunlight that played about his head and fell athwart him as though to transfix his stalwart frame. Why was it that the sharp, lance-like sunbeam suggested to my mind an Indian tomahawk; that, instead of my brother's dark thick locks (he had laid aside his peruque), I saw in a sickly fancy the ghastly adornments of a savage scalp-belt?

Impatient at myself, I rose to shut-to the door; but, looking up, he said,—

“Nay, nay, leave it ajar. The sunlight is cheerful and not at this hour over-warm, and the scent of the flowers Gaspard tends with such care is sweet as it comes to us on the breeze. To think that we have already nearly seen the last of the Moon of the Maize! These balmy days for us are numbered; soon enough shall we be forced to shut out the cold and the snow.”

At his protest, I sat me down again, and applied myself anew to my task. But ever the cruel sunbeam, glancing about the head and shoulders of our *Sieur*, distracted me from my occupation, and though I strove to banish the thought of ill by seeing in its brilliancy an augury of honors and fortune to be showered upon my brother thus in a golden

profusion, still the long, sharp ray of light took on to my mind a form of menace.

For a time we worked in silence. All at once darkness entered through the doorway, as if destiny swiftly crossed the threshold and with an eager hand snatched away the gleaming spirit-weapon of the savage.

Cadillac lifted his head quickly, and I started to my feet.

Without, on the gallery, stood a stranger, whose shadow, thus projected into the room, had interrupted us.

The fellow who intruded upon us in this fashion was a swarthy, keen-eyed Canadian, clad in a surtout of blue cloth that reached below the knees, and elk-skin trousers ornamented with fringe; around his waist was fastened a worsted sash of scarlet color amid the folds of which was thrust a broad hunting-knife, and crowning his shock of black hair was the jaunty red cap of the wood-ranger.

"Sans Souci, my trusty coureur de bois," exclaimed Cadillac, with the rare, bright smile of welcome that was as cordial of Châtreuse to the hearts of those who served him faithfully, and caused them to forget his sometime haughtiness.

"Sans Souci, and returned so soon," continued La Mothe, as his messenger came in and strode to the table. "You must have especial news wherewith you have hastened back from Montreal, giving yourself only time at the taverns on the way to quaff a cup for refreshment and another for good speed. As for trading, my faith, your customers for once must have got good bargains, since you tarried not to haggle. But have a care, have a care, or you will feel the company's bludgeon about your ears."

"A man must live, monseigneur, maugre the company," returned Sans Souci, taking the good-humored condescension of our Sieur as it was meant, for, all the world knows, a coureur de bois acknowledges no trading laws but those he makes for himself.

"What would mon Sieur say to it if I were to swear that upon this last trip I have not traded to the value of a sou, and scarce have delayed for refreshment?"

De la Mothe shook a finger at him in deprecation.

"I should say, I would as soon expect you to turn monk, Sans Souci, and eschewing all the follies of the world bind yourself to sobriety and obedience."

Sans Souci chuckled with merriment at the portrayal of himself in so unlikely a garb.

"Ha, ha, ha! the wit of mon Sieur is as keen as the edge of my knife," he cried, drawing the sleeve of his blouse across his eyes to wipe away the tears of laughter that gathered therein. "I will wait till I am sick to do penance in sackcloth and ashes. But what I have told to mon Sieur is true. Moreover, I did not go at all to Ville Marie."

"You did not go to Ville Marie," repeated Monsieur de Cadillac, now grown grave, as he fixed upon the wood-ranger a look of stern inquiry.

"What, then, of the packet of letters I gave into your keeping to be delivered to certain parties there? Also the documents for the directors of the company, and the mail to be forwarded to Monsieur de Vaudreuil?"

"Monsieur de Cadillac will be angered, yet I intrusted them to another," rejoined the coureur de bois, unflinchingly.

"Sacré!" ejaculated La Mothe, pushing back his chair and glaring at the ranger. "Sans Souci, is it in this manner you repay my confidence? Is it thus you execute the commission for which I paid you double? Are you, the coureurs de bois, become so lawless that there is not one among them worthy of trust?"

"Monsieur de la Mothe may upbraid if he will, but I ask that he will first hear me," protested Sans Souci, folding his arms and tossing his head in an aggrieved fashion.

"Eh bien, what have you to say?" demanded my brother wearily, leaning an elbow on the table, and resting a finger upon his temple, as is a habit with men of a reflective turn of mind.

"I did not go to Ville Marie," proceeded the coureur de bois, meeting the steady scrutiny to which he was subjected, "because at Fort Frontenac I learned something which I felt should be known to the Commandant of Le Détroit."

"Ah!" The exclamation broke from Cadillac like a sigh. "You must have remained some time at Fort Frontenac," he said inquiringly.

"Only so long as to make sure, to acquire all possible information," answered Sans Souci. "Here is my news for mon Sieur. The Iroquois are planning a descent upon the Indians of Le Détroit; the Commandant at Fort Frontenac says he is powerless to prevent it, but to my mind it looks as if, since the company cannot have their way at Fort Pontchartrain, they care not; so Fort Pontchartrain must needs be abandoned. Their messengers may come to warn you, but I have come first."

Here was information to shake the fortitude of the stoutest heart!

But Cadillac was a man of indomitable will; in his youth he had set out to conquer fortune, and never, until his last breath, did he acknowledge himself vanquished.

"Sans Souci," he said at length slowly to the man, who stood motionless at his side, regarding him with serious attention, — "Sans Souci, forget my hasty words of blame. You have rendered a great service to me, to Fort Pontchartrain, to the King. I will see that it is well rewarded."

"It was for mon Sieur alone I did it," replied Sans Souci, stretching out his hands with the ardent demonstration natural to the people of New France, as to their forefathers of Normandy and La Bretagne.

"Chut! Thou art a good fellow," returned Cadillac, much moved. "Come, now thou shalt tell me all thou hast learned of this matter, and how it came to thy knowledge. Meantime —"

He rang a little silver bell that stood on the table close at his hand, and Gaspard appeared.

"Gaspard," said he, "have ready meat and wine for Sans Souci presently, the best that the larder and cellar afford."

When Sans Souci had told his story and was gone with the major-domo to partake of the cheer of the manor, my brother sighed once more. He was, in truth, as near to losing courage as I had ever seen him.

"Normand," he said, pushing his chair out of the sunlight, as if its long bright lances were indeed levelled against him, — "Normand, shut-to the door."

I did so, and resumed my place.

"I meant that Fort Pontchartrain should be to the Iroquois as a mailed hand holding fast closed against them the Gates of the Northwest," he continued.

"But now, when there is war again between England and France, and with our Outawas disaffected since they accepted the invitation of the English and went to Orange, this news threatens serious consequences."

He lapsed into a melancholy cogitation, no doubt planning what to do; and I fell silent as well, thinking bitterly over these matters.

Some minutes passed thus; then, of a sudden, our *Sieur* sprang to his feet and began pacing the room with rapid strides. His despondent mood had passed, and he was once more full of energy and action.

"Were all the world against me, I would fight it still!" he burst out. "Good courage breaks ill luck; soldiers in peace are like chimneys in summer; small as is our garrison, 't is as well that their arms should not gather rust. I will conciliate our savages by presents, but I will also overawe them by my authority. The company has persecuted me, deprived me of my prerogative of trading with the Indians, and sought to wrest from me all my rights and privileges. Nevertheless, I shall vanquish them in the end. And if the Iroquois come, we shall be ready for them."

He threw back his head and drew forth his sword, as if impatient to be at his foes without delay. But, there being no one save myself in the peaceful salon, and no sign of an enemy without, either on the green or upon the sunlit expanse of the strait as far as the eye could see, with an impetuous ejaculation he dropped the blade back into its sheath and continued his pacing of the floor.

A few moments later, *Sans Souci* returned. As he came, drawing the sleeve of his blue blouse across his lips, after a last generous draught from the wine-cup, he stammered effusively, —

"Pardon! I forgot to tell Monsieur de Cadillac another morsel of news that I gathered in my absence. At Fort Frontenac I learned that Madame de Cadillac and her children, with some lady or maid, I know not who, are on their way back to Le Détroit."

La Mothe stopped short and stared at the coureur de bois in blank amazement.

"A likely tale," he said scornfully. "Madame Cadillac and her party are not to come until the spring."

"Ay, so it was to be, no doubt," insisted Sans Souci. "But Madame la Seigneuress became alarmed; she encountered some hostility toward Monsieur le Commandant at Quebec, she heard that the disgraced commissioners were plotting against him, she was not content to remain away any longer. A brave lady is madame, and she believes, I trow, that when a man is pushed by his enemies, his wife should be at his side."

"My noble-hearted Thérèse," murmured Cadillac to me under his breath, "nothing short of bolts and bars could keep her from setting out to join me, if she thought I was in trouble. Heaven reward her for her loyal love! And yet, womanlike, she must needs add to my predicament by rushing into the midst of the danger! My God, Normand, if she should fall into the hands of the Iroquois, if my children should become the victims of these merciless red hounds!"

Overcome with emotion, he sank into a chair and covered his eyes with his hand.

For me, my heart was torn with rage; I felt a sickening anxiety for Thérèse and her children. Barbe also was to have returned with them. Was it not she of whom the coureur de bois had spoken as being

the companion of my sister? There surged through my soul a wild longing to be off down the lakes and through the forest; to search the wilderness that lies between Le Détroit and Montreal, to rescue the woman who was to me more than all the world besides, from the danger that menaced her; to protect and fight for her single-handed against all the Iroquois of the land, and bring her to Le Détroit in safety. At the same time a horrible dread came upon me lest even now I should be too late, while, as I glanced about the room, as one who seeks a weapon for his foe, the sunlight, streaming in at the window, took, to my disordered fancy, the aspect of a bright lock of golden hair. Was the ruthless hand of a savage to be laid upon the shining hair I loved so well?

"Barbe, Barbe!" I exclaimed in a frenzy, snatching at my rapier.

And then my anger turned against the *coureur de bois*. I leaped upon him; but La Mothe the next moment wrested him from me and shook the poor wretch until I have since marvelled there was any breath left in the knave.

"How is it, Sans Souci?" he cried at length, having flung the fellow from him with such force that the sturdy wood-ranger fell sprawling on the floor, — "How is it, Sans Souci, that you have come hither in such haste with your news of petty official malice, and left these helpless women, my wife and her friend, my beloved children, to make their way into the very ambushes of the terrible Iroquois?"

The hand of Sans Souci sought his knife, but fell to his side again empty, as he scrambled to his feet.

"Monsieur de Cadillac wrongs me," he stated sullenly. "I thought it best to come on; but I have

already told him that I sent a messenger down to Montreal. There is in the woods no better man than he. I bade him travel night and day and, arrived at Ville Marie, to seek out Madame Cadillac at once, or if she had departed, to follow her, to advise her return to Quebec; but if she would not, to attach himself to her escort, and lead them through the forest by a way known only to the *coureur de bois*."

"Sans Souci, forgive me," said Cadillac, with impetuous chivalry, laying a hand upon the woodsman's shoulder: "I was beside myself with anxiety. You shall lead a party, headed by Monsieur Guyon, through the woods or by the waters to meet the travellers who are so dear to me, and if they reach Le Détroit in safety, I will bestow upon you the best farm in my gift, should you be minded to relinquish your roving life and cultivate the soil like a christian."

"Monsieur le Commandant has my thanks," answered Sans Souci. "If another had used me thus, he should rue the day." Here he glanced at me fiercely. "But one stabs not a man in his agony; and there are worse agonies than the throes of death. I had a wife, a gentle Miami maiden, faithful and loving as any woman of New France. The Iroquois killed her; at the scalp-belt of some demon warrior hangs her beautiful crow-black hair. I know the fury that possesses the heart of a man at the dread of such a fate for the woman dear to him. As for the land, — when I have found that fiend of an Iroquois, when I have hewn him down as one hews wood for the burning, then will I remind Monsieur de Cadillac of his promise. But, until then, Sans Souci cannot keep away from the forest and the lakes; his own heart bids him avenge the fate of his Indian wife, but

ever across the waters and from the glades and thickets he hears her sweet voice calling to him. The soft breezes seem like her spirit passing near him; the splash of the woodland springs is like the music of her laugh; at evening the light of the stars shining through the trees minds him of the brightness of her eyes; the fallen leaves rustled by the wind bring back to him her footfalls. And ever she bids him for her sake to save any woman, of high or low degree, who may be in danger from the Iroquois. Is it to be supposed, then, that I would abandon so noble a lady as Madame Cadillac to the mercy of these savage foes?"

As he thus defended his conduct, the rude woodsman seemed transformed by the emotions that stirred his rugged nature, while his rude eloquence astonished us.

"Sans Souci," I said, taking from my belt a Spanish dagger cased in silver which had been given me by my uncle Guyon of old, — "Sans Souci, I too wronged you in my thoughts. I too fancied you had failed to warn my sister and the fair lady who is perchance her companion, a lady far dearer to me than my life. Accept this, a fit gift for a brave man, as a token that there is no ill will between us."

At my words and act, the surliness of his manner vanished, and he grasped the poniard with delight.

"My faith, a fine dirk, monsieur," he cried. "I will remember nothing save that you gave it to me, and it will, in my hand, be ever at the service of the lady."

And after this gallant speech, having promised to set out with our expedition in two hours' time, he took himself off.

When he had gone, I set to gathering together cordials and such delicacies as might refresh the ladies

upon their journey, my own preparations being soon made.

"Will they return to Quebec, or will they come on, that is the question?" mused La Mothe, aloud.

"If I know my sister Thérèse, she will never turn back, unless it may be for the sake of her children," I replied.

"You are right, Normand. Thérèse may send the children to Quebec, but she will come at all hazards," he added presently.

"As for Madame de Chateauguay, why should she run so immense a risk? 'T was a strange whim that prompted her to choose a home with Thérèse in the wilderness; but now, 't were better, assuredly, that she should remain either at Beauport or with the family of De Longueil."

"Better far," I echoed, honestly hoping for her sake that she had so decided. But, alack, how selfish we are even in the affections we esteem our noblest! While I reasoned thus, my heart persistently whispered, "What Thérèse would dare, why might not Barbe?" And then again it cried out in apprehension of the perils of her way, should she be so rash as to undertake the voyage.

"At last I see how the wind blows," continued my brother, smiling: "and now I bethink me, Thérèse would fain have opened my eyes some time since."

"My sister ever loved a romance," I answered with heat.

Our Sieur laughed.

"Be that as it may," he responded, "I venture not a hazard as to whether the fair Châtelaine inclines to you, since the heart of a good woman is as the seclusion of the forest. But this I can tell you, Normand; the love of a sweetheart falls very far short of

the devotion of a wife, and I doubt if your lady would come so far to see you slaughtered by the Iroquois."

"I think she will not come; why should she, in Heaven's name?" I retorted testily to his grim jest. "Perchance the companion said to be with Thérèse may be only my sister's waiting-maid. Still, I shall on toward Montreal until I meet Thérèse or obtain some news of herself and Barbe, by which my future course may be determined."

"Yes, yes, I knew I could do no better than to send you," replied my brother.

"Had you not, I should have deserted and gone, anyhow," I declared fiercely.

Thereat he laughed again.

"Ay, ay, he who has love in his breast has spurs to his heels," he said. "And I wager you will find Madame de Chateauguay if she be on the way hither, for love is the lodestone of love."

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIRST

EVERY LOVER IS A SOLDIER

IN order not to give notice of our plan to the Outawas, whose friendship for the French had grown cold, it was necessary that the party sent to meet and escort Madame Cadillac should set out secretly. Therefore at the hour named I went with Frère Constantin in his canoe across the strait, and thence tramped with him into the forest, as if accompanying him upon some missionary errand, as was at times my wont.

When we had gone about a league from the fort, we were joined by Sans Souci, and in the course of half an hour there gathered around us a band of some twenty Miami and Huron braves who had stolen away one by one from their villages.

Our preparations complete, we — French and savage — fell upon our knees for the blessing of the Recollet.

“God guide you, my children! May the Almighty Christian Manitou, who holds the world in the hollow of his hand, preserve you and those whom you go to protect,” said Father del Halle, impressively stretching forth his arms over us. The next moment we sprang to our feet ready to depart.

My kind friend turned to me again, with paternal affection.

“God keep you, Normand,” he continued; “may He give you success upon your errand.”

A wave of emotion swept over me. I could not speak, but on the impulse, and reserved man though I was, I knelt once more and, as is the custom of the lads of New France, raised the hand of the good curé to my lips.

Thereat he was much moved, and making the sign of the cross upon my brow, blessed me again.

Ah, that parting! How frequently since have I recalled it, and how thankful am I that, as time went on, the tie of friendship that bound me to Frère Constantin waxed stronger and our esteem for each other more tender. As I look back now, it seems to me that from this time the likeness I had ever observed in him to the gentle Francis of Assisi grew more marked; the shy creatures of the woods, the squirrels and the deer, fled not in timidity at his approach, nor did the birds fly away or cease their song. And with the Indians no one who ever toiled in this region, save only the revered Père Marquette, ever had greater influence.

In Old France the people have a legend whereof I have often bethought me in our wilderness. At the season when the earth is in its glory, either with the freshness of spring or in Nature's ripened loveliness, — at such season, say the peasants, on the morning of some perfect day there comes to the forests an hour of holiness. The trees bend low their stately heads, the flowers give forth their sweetest fragrance, the soft breeze sweeps the green carpet of moss and vines, the birds awake yet forget to sing, and the streams flow with fainter music, as they wait in reverence. At that hour, heralded by the first rays of light, the blessed Christ walks through the Woods. Ay, of the legend I often thought as I beheld Frère Constantin, so true a follower of the Divine Mission-

ary, traversing our trackless forests of New France with his message of peace and good-will.

Some ten days our party journeyed, through the heart of the Indian summer. The hand of God seemed to rest upon the forests, so glorious were they in their splendor of gold and crimson and russet. Ever we pressed onward, keeping a sharp lookout for foes in ambush, yet animated by the happy spirit of adventure which finds a zest in the proximity of danger.

Once we crossed the trail of a band of savages who our Hurons said were Iroquois, from certain signs I wot not of; for the children of the wilderness, like the wild creatures who share their haunts, are wondrous versed in the lore of Nature, and pay close heed to her ambassadors, the winds and waters. To them a crushed vine, a broken twig, is often a clue to the designs of their enemies.

On another day Sans Souci, hearing a sound in a thicket which he took to be the stir of a young elk, fired into the greenery. The next moment a hoarse whoop rent the air, and a savage leaped out upon him, but only, with another unearthly yell, to fall dead at his feet.

It was Mawkwa, the father of Ishkodah the Fury, who had dogged our way.

This discovery showed us that our expedition had, despite our precautions, become known to the hostile Outawas, and gave us some uneasiness, on account of the ladies whom we were hastening to meet.

"Pardieu! That yell will bring the red inhabitants of the wilds upon us like a nest of hornets," I exclaimed as I drew my blade, ready for the others, should they leap forth.

For answer, Sans Souci took his knife from his belt, rolled the body of the dead savage out of our path with his foot, and we pressed on, our Indians following with bent bows.

The dying outcry of the chief summoned no band of infuriated redskins, however. Nor did aught come of our encounter with a small party of Iroquois, a day or two later, when we had a sharp fight and I laid low a brawny fellow who had raised his hatchet to hew down Sans Souci, and received an arrow that was meant for my heart but by a fortunate chance lodged in the fleshy part of my arm. From it, though the wound was slight, I should doubtless have suffered much, by reason of the poison, had not one of our allies made for the hurt a poultice of certain leaves which took from it much of the fire.

Thus we went onward for above a week, over the wastes and across the inland waters, at the portages our men carrying the canoes upon their shoulders.

One morning, after having floated down a small river, we landed, and crossed a valley where we had a shot at a grazing herd of buffaloes, and I brought down a fierce bull while one of our Indians laid low another. The remainder of the herd sped away, and were quickly lost to sight in a neighboring grove.

Half an hour later, the same Indian bent his bow at a stirring of the underbrush, as we wandered in the forest; but ere he could let fly one of his fateful arrows, Sans Souci caught his arm.

A moment after, out from among the bushes, sprang a great gray dog, of the kind that is of the breed of the wolf, and a denizen of the wilderness.

"Have a care, Sans Souci, the creature will tear

you as he would a rabbit; and this you well know," I cried, as the animal leaped upon the *coureur de bois* in a frenzy of excitement.

But it was not as I feared, the dog was not mad with rage; on the contrary, he was nearly crazed with joy.

"Ma belle, ma belle! It is Mishawaha herself, my faithful Mishawaha," exclaimed Sans Souci, scarcely less delighted than the yelping beast. "Ah, monsieur, now we shall speedily have tidings of those whom you seek. I left Mishawaha among my friends in the woods some leagues from Fort Frontenac. She must have followed the *coureur de bois* whom I sent to escort Madame Cadillac. Madame la Seigneuress and her party must be in this neighborhood, unless—" He shook his head ominously, and continued under his breath, "Mishawaha is not wont to be so foolish! Why does she menace the safety of those whom she undertook to guard, by straying away from them and raising this din? Unless—"

He broke off abruptly, and it was with a sinking heart that I pushed ahead of him upon the trail to which the dog led us.

Thank God, our dire forebodings came to naught. The sagacious animal had only discovered the approach of her master, and had stolen away to greet him.

Beyond a little hillock we entered presently a secluded ravine. Here we found the party we sought, just as they were about to break camp for the journey of the day.

What a providence it is that the route from Montreal to Le Détroit and the Northwest is marked out by so many noble water-ways down which the voyager may float in restfulness! Had it been otherwise,

never could even the most valiant of women have attempted the journey.

As I advanced through the greenery, I now saw before me a most captivating picture. Seated like a queen upon the bank of the ravine was my sister, Madame Cadillac, as serene as though posed for her portrait by that same young painter, Antoine Watteau, of whom I have erstwhile made mention as having later won fame; my sweet sister Thérèse, in a robe of dun color laced with silver, her brown hair dressed low, — for, happily, the fontange was going out of vogue, — her hazel eyes shining softly as the starlight for which the Indians named her. The fresh breeze had brought a pink tint to her usually pale cheeks, and despite the sombreness of her attire, she looked younger and still more comely than when she went away. There, beside her, was little Jacques, now playing with the dog, which had bounded back to them in an abandonment of glee the reason whereof they failed to understand. There was Françoise, the maid, coquetting with their guide, a handsome young coureur de bois; there, forming a circle of dark faces, were the Indians who made up the escort. And there — yes, verily, and I felt my face flush red, as my eyes turned upon her, standing just beyond Thérèse, and clasping in her arms a great bouquet of scarlet sumach sprays and golden maple leaves, — there was Barbe, also most quietly attired, and wearing upon her shining hair a little coif of velvet; Barbe, more lovely than I had ever beheld her.

At my appearance both women screamed, doubting if it could be myself in the flesh. My voice speedily reassured them, however, and Thérèse fell upon my breast with a glad cry. Young Jacques caught me by the coat; even Françoise forgot her coureur de

bois long enough to murmur an ecstatic "Oh, monsieur!" and clapped her palms together as she looked up to the fair sky in thankfulness. Only Barbe stood aloof, with a strange shyness that yet gave her, to my mind, an added grace.

"Miladi Barbe, have *you* not a welcome for me?" I asked, drawing near to her when Thérèse let me free.

"A thousand, Normand," she said in a tremulous tone, and thereat quickly turned away her gaze, thinking perhaps to hide from me the tears in her bright eyes, — tears that were like glistening dewdrops upon two purple violets.

I took her hands in mine and, bending my head, touched them with my lips.

"Did you not know I would come, Barbe?" I whispered earnestly.

Again those beautiful eyes met my own.

"Yes, Normand, I knew you would come," she answered gently.

And then, as once before, in her girlhood's days at the siege of Quebec, she saw that I was wounded.

"Oh, Normand, how came this?" she cried, going deathly white. "A scratch from an Indian arrow, you say! Are you sure the wound has been properly tended? A dressing of some forest herb, moistened at a spring of clear cool water, is the remedy, they tell me."

Thereupon she must needs hear all about the skirmish, and learn from the Miami what he had done for me; though 'twas of a far different matter I was minded to talk to her.

Howbeit she gave me no chance, — neither then, nor during our journey back to Fort Pontchartrain. Moreover, she was at great pains to explain to me

that she had come with Madame Cadillac because to her mind Thérèse ran into peril by coming at all, and she could not see her set out with no woman companion other than her maid. As if the companionship of so lovely a lady as the Chatelaine of Chateauguay would make the way safer for my sister!

By a special providence, or so it seemed, we reached Le Détroit in safety, and the wife of Cadillac was installed in the new manor, with the Lady of Chateauguay again as her guest.

At the fort all were still on the watch and prepared as far as might be for the coming of the Iroquois.

The savages of Le Détroit were warned by our Sieur of the threatened attack from their ancient foe; the tomahawk painted red was sent from village to village; the Medicine Men consulted their Manitous. Bands of our warriors ranged the forests, or, taking to their canoes, floated down the strait and the Lake of the Eries, on the alert to discover the movements of the enemy. Saint Martin's Summer, usually a time devoted to the annual games and thank offerings of the Indians, was become a season of practice for war.

One starlight night a party of braves returned to Le Détroit in triumph, with scalps at their belts, and bringing some six or seven captives. They had met a band of Iroquois, had fought them, and slain a goodly number.

At the gates of the palisade they demanded an interview with the Commandant. Albeit the hour was late, the chief, Wingeezee, was admitted, and conducted to the presence of De la Mothe, and the interpreter De Lorme was summoned to the parley in the council room of the barracks.

"My father," began the chief, "we have met a horde of Iroquois and have slain many. With these our foes was a white warrior who fought with as great fierceness as any red man, yet with less of cunning, it looked to us, since twice he spared two of our number who were wounded; an Indian delays not to drive the tomahawk into the heart of a fallen enemy. The Iroquois who were not hewn down like the trees of the forest, fled, abandoning their pale-faced ally to us. But thinking our Father would be angry with us, if we robbed him of his vengeance, we have brought the white chief to our Father, to do with him as he wills."

"Wingeezee, you and your warriors have done well," replied Monsieur de Cadillac, inclining his head. "There is no braver chief on Le Détroit than the great Eagle. I will tell Onontio in Quebec of your service to the French. Gifts you shall have of me, also, when you have delivered this captive into my hands."

"This night he shall be given to my Father," said the chief.

"Let him be rendered to Sergeant Jolicœur at the gate, and Monsieur Guyon will furnish to you, Wingeezee, such stores from the King's ammunition as shall compensate you," decreed the Commandant.

Selecting a fusee and a small quantity of powder and bullets from the storehouse, I went with the chief to the gate.

The white man had been bound hand and foot, and was passed over to us like a log, being borne in and laid upon the ground by two of the Indians. I then presented the musket and ammunition to Wingeezee, — a dangerous gift, but he would have been satisfied with naught else.

When he and his followers were gone, I looked toward the prisoner. His head was turned to one side, and his chapeau had slipped down so as to partly conceal his face. I knew from his uniform, however, that he was English, and my heart grew hot with anger.

"Bah! the hardihood of these Bostonnais, thus to venture into the wilderness," I muttered to myself. "What could he hope for but to be abandoned by his allies, should their opponents prove too strong for them? How little wit he had, to spare the lives of our savages, who know not the emotion of mercy! Small wonder he was taken captive."

Much as I hated the red-coat, it was not seemly to leave him thus bound.

No sooner did the thought occur to me than I strode over to where he lay and with a stroke of my rapier cut the thongs that held him rigid.

"Rise, monsieur," I said. "Whatever indignities you may have suffered at the hands of the savages are now passed. Honor needs no bonds. You are indeed still a prisoner, but a prisoner of the King of France; and whatever may be your fate, be assured you will be accorded the treatment of a gentleman, in so far as it is possible thus to treat an emissary of our foes."

Whether there was in my words aught of comfort for the unhappy man, I cannot say. No sooner did he feel himself free than he sprang to his feet and glanced about him.

But his limbs were palsied from having been so long bandaged, and a faintness came over him, causing him to sink back upon the ground with a groan.

"Phouff! The savages made him abstain from food more rigorously than an anchorite, and, I doubt

not, the poor wretch is wellnigh crazed with thirst as well," quoth Jolicœur.

Compassion was not dead within me. I put a draught of water to the lips of the captive, and when he had revived in a slight degree, gave him a cup of wine.

Soon his strength returned in part, and getting upon his feet once more, he straightened himself with a haughty air and gave me a glance wherein were blended gratitude for my service, pride, and courage.

His countenance was strangely familiar to me. Where had I seen him before?

"Monsieur," I said presently, in courteous fashion, "I regret to behold a brave man in so sad a plight."

"'T is the fortune of war," he answered with sangfroid, as though in the outcome of his dilemma he had no concern, — a coolness as unlike the dashing gallantry of a Frenchman under similar circumstances as is the impenetrability of ice to the sparkling coolness of a forest spring. "But how have you concluded that I am not a poltroon?" he added with a calm smile.

"Only a man brave unto rashness would rush into the heart of an enemy's country with a body of treacherous Indians and upon a fool's errand," I returned with sharp evasion.

At my plain naming of his mission, he scowled defiantly, and, in obedience to the instinct of a soldier, his hand sought his sword, then dropped to his side, as he despondently realized that the weapon had been taken from him.

"If monsieur is ready, I will conduct him to the Commandant," I continued, regretting my bluntness.

He bowed assent, and I led the way, the red-coat

coming next, and Jolicœur bringing up the rear, and keeping a close eye upon the prisoner, as was his duty.

The council room of the barracks wore a funereal aspect as we entered it. The rough walls were dark with shadows; the flickering light of the pine knots smoking in their sockets was veritably ghastly.

Upon the dais at one end of the room sat Cadillac, majestic and imposing in his fine court dress. Evidently he would fain impress the Englishman with his dignity as the representative of the King of France, and his own sovereignty, I may say, over the region into which the stranger had intruded with such temerity.

The scene minded me of a picture from a graver's plate that I saw in Paris, — a gravure of one Jacques Gallot, which represented the sombre chances of war, and was as far removed from gay little pastorals from the brush of the young Antoine Watteau, as is the sunshine from the gloom of dusk, when the rays of light die away, like the glow of a torch that is quenched.

The prisoner saluted the assembly with quiet nonchalance, and then stood before them erect and with a scornful air, as one who minded not the stateliness of the tribunal nor cared to plead for clemency.

"Monsieur," said Cadillac, addressing him, "you are a Bostonnais. What is your name?"

"Sir Commandant, I am an English officer; this is all you need to know," he corrected suavely.

"With us, monsieur, the terms Bostonnais and English are synonymous, though some among us are more versed in your southern geography than may be supposed," rejoined De la Mothe. "You decline to say how you are called; well, Monsieur le Boston-

nais, have you any explanation to make? How came you to be in this new province of the King of France at the time of your apprehension?"

"I was a traveller," began the Englishman, guardedly.

"Nay, monsieur, these papers," interrupted our Sieur, tapping with his finger a small packet that had been put into his hand by Wingeezee, — "these papers, a diminutive but well-drawn map showing the country, these notes of our defences prove you had ere now ventured near enough to our fortifications to observe them carefully. You are a spy, monsieur, and the fate of a spy, you know, is death."

The words of Cadillac were followed by a moment of terrible silence. There was no hope for the stranger; his papers had convicted him.

At this time, in face of the danger that threatened the very existence of the fort, the Commandant would be inexorable, as a glance at the set visage of La Mothe assured me.

The momentous stillness, during which we heard no sound save the breathing of one another, was broken at last by the prisoner himself.

"Monsieur le Commandant," he said, throwing back his head proudly, "it was not a love of glory that led me to undertake a journey into the country of those with whom my people are at war; yet fame I should have won had I been successful. I came in the service of my flag. You term me a spy, but in my own land I shall be honored as a hero. I fear not death, and crave not your mercy. All I ask of your chivalry is as to the manner of my death. I am a gentleman and a soldier; let me die then to the roll of the drum and the report of a volley of musketry."

"The punishment decreed for a spy is not that he be shot," answered Monsieur de Cadillac, curtly.

His words must have been as a cruel blow to the Englishman; nevertheless the latter lost not his coolness, but drew himself up more rigidly than before, if this were possible, and unflinchingly met the gaze of his foes.

With all the dignity at his command, my brother arose and pronounced sentence.

"Monsieur le Bostonnais," he said, "as the representative here at Fort Pontchartrain of his Majesty Louis the Fourteenth, King of France, and of the provinces of New France and Acadia, and of Le Détroit, and by virtue of the authority vested in me, I, Commandant and Seigneur, having in my possession incontestable proofs of your guilt, do upon their evidence condemn you as a spy, and decree that to-morrow at sunrise, at the gate of the palisade, you shall be hanged by the neck until dead."

A long-drawn sigh was the only sound heard in the room for some seconds after La Mothe had ceased to speak.

The Commandant glanced sharply about, as he sank back into his chair, and straightway I found that all in the assembly were looking at me. For it was not the prisoner who had sighed; it was I. His sentence was just; but my heart smote me that a man so young and gallant should meet so ignominious a fate.

By a lordly wave of his hand, Cadillac motioned to Jean Joly to remove the prisoner.

Ere the sergeant took a step forward, however, there was a commotion in the passage without, as of a woman's voice disputing with the guards and appealing to them.

The next moment the door of the room burst open, revealing a picture that caused every man of the assembly to start with astonishment. Ay, even the demeanor of Monsieur de Cadillac grew less composed, although this was scarce perceptible to any but myself, who knew him so well; while the Englishman, who had not blanched at his sentence, now changed color and drew his hand across his brow in a confused manner.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SECOND

THE LION BEARDED

IN the doorway stood none other than Miladi Barbe, richly attired, as she ever was in the evening and at dinner, for the ladies at Fort Pontchartrain affected much of state and ceremony, in order to keep up the prestige of the post and the seigneurie with the soldiery and settlers. Moreover, I have ever noted that when a woman has silken gowns and costly ornaments she will make occasion to display them.

Yet the Lady of Chateauguay thought not of the impression she created as, a vision of life, youth, and beauty, she confronted the tomblike silence of the room with its weird shadows, its flickering torches, and the stern faces of the circle of men who surrounded the condemned.

She had thrown back the hood of the long cloak of camlet cloth which she had plainly donned in great haste; and the cloak, fallen open, now slipped to the ground. Her gown was one whereof I had often taken note,—a red and dove-colored damask flowered in large trees. Her hair was all in sweet disorder, and although still held partly in place by a jewelled dagger, had slipped low upon her shoulders, as if she had dragged it down in the frenzy of a great excitement. Her face was suffused with a delicate flush, like to the pink bloom of the eglantine; tears sparkled in her eyes, and her white hands clutched

so nervously at the lace upon her bodice and the sprays of golden-rod she wore against her neck, that she heedlessly tore to shreds the fairy gossamer, as though it oppressed her breathing, and wantonly crushed the yellow flowers.

"I crave your pardon, Monsieur de Cadillac, and that of all these gentlemen," she gasped, glancing from one to another of the tribunal in graceful and pathetic entreaty. "I know not what breach of the law I commit by intruding here, nor what may be the penalty. Nevertheless listen to me. Messieurs, I am a Bostonnaise. It came to my ears that a Bostonnais prisoner had been brought in with the captive Iroquois; that he is like to be condemned to death as a spy. Monsieur de Cadillac, I come to intercede for my countryman! Monsieur de Cadillac, I beg you to have mercy!"

Therewith she stretched out her hands to him most piteously.

The brows of La Mothe contracted with mental pain, but he made her no answer, and his visage grew harder than before.

In desperation she glanced along the line of faces before her, as if seeking an ally. A moment her gaze rested upon me, then it travelled to the prisoner, to whose personality she now for the first time gave heed, so eager had she been to plead his cause.

The beautiful eyes of Miladi Barbe shone with sympathy as she turned them upon the Bostonnais. All at once, however, she recoiled in bewilderment, clasped her trembling hands upon her breast, and uttered a low cry of astonishment.

The officer condemned to die at sunrise was he who at Quebec had come to demand of my uncle Guyon that Barbe be suffered to go to her own

people; the officer who had maintained the same demand at the Château of St. Louis; the officer who, as the envoy of Sir Phipps, had bearded Comte Frontenac in his own council hall, and undauntedly delivered his haughty message at the peril of his life.

Now, as the gaze of the gallant soldier met that of the Lady of Chateauguay in mutual recognition, her face assumed an expression of horror, but his cleared; he held his head higher, as if proudly triumphant rather than crushed by defeat, while he so far forgot his situation as even to smile into those anxious eyes, as if forsooth 't was she who had need of cheer, and not himself. Whether those eloquent glances rekindled in the heart of each a flame awakened long ago, or whether the fact that the prisoner was not to her a stranger reinforced her courage, I could not determine. Again she turned to Cadillac, to renew her plea.

He raised a hand in warning.

"Madame de Chateauguay, this is unprecedented," he said sternly; "I beg of you to retire. This is a tribunal of justice, not a mercy-seat. It is not meet that ladies, however fair, should interrupt the deliberations of a military court."

"For my audacity I again crave your pardon," she answered with a dignified humility. "As I have said, I am a Bostonnaise, and I pray you to grant me the life of this officer, who indeed is not unknown to me."

As these last words fell from her lips, the countenance of La Mothe changed, and he shot at her a look of suspicion and inquiry.

"What, the daughter of François Guyon, the daughter-in-law of De Longueil, the widow of a gallant Le Moyne who died fighting the English! — that

this lady should openly declare herself to be a *Bostonnaise*, is astounding truly," he said with great severity, "and it is scarce like to serve the man for whom she stoops to plead. That the Lady of Chateauguay knows aught of the prisoner I cannot credit, since to do so would imply that she is in league with our enemies."

He looked from one to another of his subordinates, as though asking their assent to his words, and they bowed their heads. Verily they had been overwhelmed with surprise, for so generally was Barbe known as the daughter of François Guyon and his wife Marguerite Marsolet, that few there were in Quebec who remembered she was their child but by adoption; while the family of De Longueil was so identified with the fame and glories of New France none thought to find among them one of alien race.

From the faces of the company whereon were plainly written blank astonishment and incredulity, I turned to regard the prisoner.

Once more he smiled, though the sword of fate was already raised to cut him off in his strong manhood and he stood weaponless, without power or opportunity to parry the blow. Ah, that confident, quiet smile! 'Twas as if he would have said, "I declared of old that the lady was English at heart, now does she not prove the truth of my words?"

Oh, these English, so proud that here even in the face of death this officer found satisfaction in the fulfilment of his supercilious assumption on a day of years ago in Quebec. These *Bostonnais*, so persistent, yet withal so loyal and true!

The Lady of Chateauguay struggled to control her emotion. She had, alas, chosen her words in a

manner calculated to injure the prisoner, had not his cause been already hopeless. But only for a moment was she disconcerted. Raising her head with a gentle dignity worthy of the lovely La Maintenon herself, she said,—

“Monsieur de Cadillac, it is well known to you that from my childhood I have loved New France, its people and its lilies, with all my heart; from my marriage I have honored and kept unsullied the name of Le Moyne of Chateauguay. Never until the exchange of the English prisoners at Quebec did I realize that I was not born a subject of the Sun King. That day, an English officer sought me out, and offered me, in the name of Sir William Phipps, the chaperonage of an estimable lady and safe conduct to my native land. He was eloquent and most kind, but I laughed at him. I told him my country was New France; that beneath the banner of the fleur-de-lis I would live and die. Still he persisted, saying he would lay the matter before the Governor. He undertook to compel me to go against my will, and this was more than I could brook with patience. I too went to Comte Frontenac, who assured me of his protection, and added, half in jest but with something of earnestness, that if I would prove myself a daughter of New France I must needs take a husband in Quebec; thus none but the French could ever claim me. Therewith, gladly and not in jest, I promised to follow the admonition of Monsieur le Comte, and the Bostonnais officer was dismissed with idle ceremony. When making his adieux to me, he said in all courtesy—well I remember the words — ”

Miladi Barbe paused, and the crimson glow of her cheeks deepened as she glanced, half timidly, at the

prisoner. "Yes, thus he said: 'Sweet mistress, in your choice I wish you all content and happiness. Nevertheless a Bostonnaise you are, and a Bostonnaise you will discover yourself to be some day. Perchance the day lies in the far distant future, but come it will.' Monsieur de Cadillac, messieurs, the envoy was this officer before you, — this officer, of whom I have seen or heard naught from that hour until the present. I kept my word given to Monsieur de Frontenac; I became the bride of one of the noblest scions of Quebec; I am the widow of a hero of New France. When I die, I wish to have the ground where I am laid sown with fleur-de-lis, that they may grow up out of my heart. I will not deny that when I became a woman I would fain have learned more of my parentage, that a longing to see the country of my birth has sometimes disquieted me. Still, in all things have I been loyal to the country of my adoption. Now I ask of my lily-crowned mother the life of this Bostonnaise. Monsieur de Cadillac, I implore you, as her representative, do not deny me this boon."

La Mothe was moved by this appeal and Miladi Barbe's unconscious eloquence, as I could see by the expression of emotion that flitted over his features. It was quickly gone, however, and they became as rigid as before.

"Madame," he began austere, "what you ask is impossible. Beauty may presume where even intrepidity dares not. Did any one save so fair a lady thus interrupt this court, I should have the offender put in irons. Therefore, madame, in all courtesy to you as the representative of one of the most illustrious families of New France and as the guest of Madame Cadillac, I again beg you to retire."

Pressing her hands together in her distress, Barbe looked toward me, as if praying me to add my intercession to hers. Freely would I have done so had I not known only too well it would be futile. Cadillac was resolved, and naught could alter his decision.

At this juncture the prisoner took a step forward and turned to the woman who had so bravely cast to the winds the ceremonious observances of our little world in her effort to save him.

"Lady," he said in a voice that now trembled slightly, albeit he had heard his sentence without faltering, — "Lady, I beseech you plead no more for me; your anxiety, and it alone, unmans me. A soldier does not fear death; in seasons of war he sometimes faces it daily. An officer of New England, I took my life in my hands when I came into this wilderness. Dying heroes have told us it is sweet to die for one's country, and I regret not that I am to taste of this sweetness. Ah, lady, were the cup as bitter as wormwood, it would become as nectar by virtue of the words you have spoken in my behalf. Did I say your prayers and tears unnerve me? Yes, because they stir the deepest feelings of my heart; and I reproach myself that unwittingly I have crossed the path of your life again, to give you even a moment of unselfish sadness. But for myself, ah, sweet mistress, your sympathy, your gentle interest, are as wine for the gods. Were I faint-hearted as the veriest craven, they would fill me with courage; with so fair a hand to buckle on the armor of my valor, I would be coward indeed, did I not confront fate boldly. From the day long since in Quebec, when you answered me with the grace of a demoiselle of New France, the spirit of an English

maid, your image has been ever in my heart; you and you alone have reigned therein from that day to the present. Madame, I thank and bless you! What greater boon could a soldier ask than to die for his country, yet to have as his advocate the fair lady of his heart's devotion? Accept my gratitude. All I request further is that you will forget the ignoble manner of my death and — that you will remember me as your countryman."

Barbe's gaze, which had been riveted upon the countenance of the *Bostonnais*, now swept the circle of the darker faces of the French officers in agonized distress.

"The ignoble manner of his death," she repeated in a dazed fashion, as if but half comprehending, and forgetting the awkwardness of his strange avowal of love in the shock which appalled her.

"The *Bostonnais* officer is already sentenced? And to be —"

Her lips refused to frame the word, but again her trembling hands clutched at the lace of the *fichu* about her throat, and tore away the flowers that rested against the pure whiteness of her neck.

"My God, *Monsieur de Cadillac*," she broke out in desperation, "have you no mercy? Will naught move you? Is New France so niggardly that she will grant nothing to her daughters? Am I to find her, after all, but a cold foster-mother, who denies a mother's love to the stranger child at her hearth? If this be so — Oh, friends, my father, my own father, was mayhap, I have been told, an English officer such as is this gentleman. You bid me cease to plead, but can I be silent while one who is as of my kindred rests under sentence of a shameful death?"

La Mothe slowly rose to his feet.

"My Lady de Chateauguay," he said with deliberation, "your eloquence and perseverance do you honor; nevertheless, tempt not my patience further. It is impossible for me to grant your request and let this prisoner go free, or even to keep him in duress. He is a convicted spy, and as such has forfeited the right to clemency. As a warning to the English, he must pay the penalty of his temerity. The present safety, the future existence of Fort Pontchartrain may depend upon stringent measures now. Still, to prove to you that New France is not heedless of the prayer of a daughter, even a foster-daughter," he added with unnecessary sarcasm, "I will alter the sentence in so far as to accede to the request of Monsieur le Bostonnais. Monsieur, your petition is granted, you shall die like a gentleman and a soldier."

At these words of the Commandant, a light almost of joy shone upon the face of the Englishman, and he bowed to his judge with a courtesy which I have never seen surpassed.

But Barbe! — dear Barbe saw not that she had won for her countryman the one favor he craved, and had removed from his fate its ignominy. For Miladi Barbe swayed blindly and would have fallen but that I sprang forward and caught her in my arms. She had fainted.

On the instant La Mothe signalled Jolicœur to remove the prisoner. Ere they passed out, however, the Bostonnais, without let or hindrance, strode across the room to the rude bench covered with a wolf's skin, whereon I had laid my lovely burden; I being now engaged in chafing her limp hands.

Kneeling upon one knee, he bent his head and kissed the hem of her robe. Then espying upon the

floor a spray of the golden-rod she had torn away from her bodice, he eagerly caught it up, pressed it also to his lips, and thrust it into the breast of his coat.

The next moment he suffered himself to be led away by Jolicœur.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THIRD

TO BE SHOT AT SUNRISE

TO be shot at sunrise.

It was a fate tragic enough, although the Bostonnais had welcomed it so gladly as a concession from the hangman's noose. One so brave, and but little over thirty years of age, was to be shot as a spy in the wilderness! Yes, it was a hard fate for an honorable man who had only done his duty as he knew it. The consequences might indeed have been disastrous to us had he succeeded, yet, since he had failed — well, he had gained but the fortune of such service. Of this I thought as I sat alone in my room at the house of Frère Constantin, an hour after the breaking up of the court.

Much as I pitied the Englishman, it had cut me to the heart to hear Barbe admit so deep an interest in him; while at his open avowal that she had been since the day of long ago the Lady of his Dreams, were it not for his position, I would fain have challenged him by a look to a duel à l'outrance, — a challenge to be followed up in a more formal manner once we were out of the lady's presence.

Still, I liked not at all the certainty of so soon being rid of him, either.

He was a prisoner, sentenced to die at sunrise. Our good Recollet had gone to him now, to offer him such spiritual consolation as he would accept, and presently I would go and write down any last

instructions he might wish to give; and if he desired companionship during these final hours, I would remain with him as long as might be.

From these reflections I was aroused by a sound as of some one beating with a stick upon the pickets of the palisade which surrounded the house. Going out, I found at the entrance Jules, the little Pani slave.

"For you, Monsieur Guyon," he said, as I opened the gate; and, thrusting a thin strip of birch bark into my hand, he was off again ere I could question him.

Puzzled, I carried the strange little missive into the cabin and read it by the light of the hearth-fire.

"Be at the beech-tree in the King's Garden as soon as may be."

This I saw writ in characters once to me familiar, albeit more elegant than when I knew them. And then I held the note nearer to the blaze and smiled as I deciphered the signature, — a little Spanish shoe!

"Miladi!" I exclaimed under my breath, and smiled again at the recollection of a day long, long ago, when my uncle Guyon had brought to little Barbe the dainty footgear affected by the beauties of Spain when they walk abroad, — little pattens or sandals of velvet set upon plates of gold which raise the feet some inches from the ground.

And the pretty child had sported them upon the beach of Beauport, leaving the story of her play writ in countless fairy-like footprints upon the strand. Thereat we had together traced in these footprints a likeness to the characters I wrote in my Latin themes; and afterwards sometimes I had found upon the margin of my fairest and most serious copies, slyly limned there by a childish hand, a little shoe

like to this, with mayhap a few letters added such as these, "Barbe, her mark."

Barbe! There was nothing untoward in her sending for me at this hour of nine in the evening, yet so extraordinary was it that but for this naïve signature I might have suspected the ruse of an enemy, and have hesitated to play the fool by going alone to obey the summons.

But the little shoe! No one knew it stood for the name of Barbe but our two selves; she had not made use of it to call me to her side since her early girlhood, yet, had she now by it summoned me across the world, I should have gone, understanding that she had need of my aid. Perhaps, indeed, it would be but another message from her I should find in the King's Garden.

By the river under the beech-tree it was Miladi herself who awaited me, however, although, muffled as she was in her cloak, I did not at first recognize her.

I soon found that her thoughts were not of me, nor was this to be at all a lover's tryst.

"Normand, Normand, I am so thankful you have come," she whispered anxiously. "Oh, Normand, is not this most terrible? He must not die! We must save him!"

"Save the Bostonnais now! It is impossible!" I exclaimed. "Cadillac is inexorable. Did you not exhaust your powers of pleading in vain?"

"Yes, yes. I also besought Thérèse to plead with him; and when he returned to the manor I prayed him on my knees to at least delay the execution of the sentence. He would not. Nevertheless the Bostonnais must not die. Ah, why have I revealed to you even so much? But you, as a clerk, will, I

have learned, be permitted to go to him shortly to take down his last wishes. You, and you alone, will see him. All I ask of you then is to tell him that his rescue will be attempted ere morning, in order that when the moment comes he may avail of it."

"All you ask!" I ejaculated, aghast. "Barbe, what you ask is treason! Do you not know that the Englishman has information which would serve the enemy well against us?"

"No, no, not treason!" she protested. "You must require him to give his assurance that he will not use against us any information he has acquired; that he will not fight against us at all in this war. Not even to save him would I commit treason."

"A woman's reasoning," I muttered with a sigh; "but did you not hear Monsieur le Commandant say it behooved him to make an example of this unfortunate gentleman? Moreover, the safety of the fort, our possessions on Le Détroit, may lie in the balance. Would you risk a hundred lives to save one, the life of an enemy of New France?"

"The safety of Fort Pontchartrain, how can it be affected when the man is required to take oath that he will be as one blind to what passed before him? And will the English be greatly affrighted, think you, by the sacrifice of the life of a free lance? Monsieur de Cadillac may strike terror to the hearts of the Five Nations by his threats, but, ha, ha, ha! he can never hope to make a Bostonnais afraid," she concluded, with a toss of her pretty head which angered me, and a laugh that was most musical withal.

"Barbe," I queried, turning upon her almost brusquely, "'t is a strange question, yet I must needs ask it: 'What are you now, French or Bostonnais?'"

She caught her breath with a sob like an unhappy child.

"Mon Dieu, Normand, in sooth I do not know," she faltered, wringing her hands. "Ever to this hour have I been French; but—but—if the Bostonnais is shot at sunrise, I will go to the English; I will say to them: 'The people whom I have loved all my life have denied my prayer. I am of your race; I will make my home among you.' Yes, yes, I will pluck the fleurs-de-lis from my heart, and trample them under my feet."

"What! You, the widow of Chateauguay!" I exclaimed hotly.

At this she fell to weeping.

"Oh, Normand, Normand, I am talking wildly, I mean not what I say," she cried, burying her face in her hands. "But what—what am I to do?"

I bent nearer to her. I gently laid hold of her jewelled fingers and drew them away from her sweet eyes that still overflowed with tears, as I could see in the moonlight.

"Barbe," I said abruptly, "you love this Bostonnais."

"No, no," she answered.

"It must be so," I went on obstinately, "else why this agony? Spies have been shot before in New France, yet you have not grieved in this fashion."

"Oh, it was never brought home to me before," she urged.

"This is not the reason. You love this Bostonnais," I repeated. "Years ago I feared it was the case; that as a young demoiselle at Quebec your maiden's fancy was caught by the splendor of his scarlet coat, the gold lace of his chapeau, and, per-

chance, a trifle too by his frank countenance and soldierly bearing."

"Normand, Normand," she stammered between her sobs, "you do not understand."

"I understand only too well," I persisted morosely. "You have given your heart to the Englishman. Why do you seek to hide the truth from me when it is so plain?"

She checked the womanly denial that again trembled upon her lips, and of a sudden, turning to me with naïve defiance, said, as she drew away the soft hands she had suffered to rest in mine, —

"Eh bien, my cousin, if I should acknowledge to you that I have given my heart to the *Bostonnais*, what would you do?"

"What would I do, Barbe?" I echoed wonderingly.

"Ay, if I were to tell you that I love him?"

"Barbe, I believe I would do anything rather than see you grieve or weep," I admitted.

"You would save him?"

"If I could in honor."

"Oh," she gasped in disappointment, "what is it that you men call honor?"

Alack, alack! Of what folly is a man often guilty for the sake of a woman's sweet eyes? In the light of the moon Barbe was more lovely, more spirituelle, than I had ever beheld her; though in sooth every time I saw her I thought her lovelier than before. Her fairness was not for me, I knew, yet now verily her beauty turned my head.

"You will save him," she whispered.

"If you love him, Barbe," I answered, with a choking sensation the while, as if the demon of jealousy had me by the throat. "I love *you*, Barbe; I have loved you since you were a child, before you

knew the meaning of the words 'I love you.' This is indeed a death-blow to all my hopes. Still, if your happiness depends upon the saving of the life of this Bostonnais, why then, Barbe, I will do this, I will do everything you ask, I will cast all consequences to the winds, if only I can help you, if I can make you happy," I cried recklessly.

"No, you must keep as clear of the matter as possible," she replied, veering about on the instant. "Were there any one else to take the message, I would have kept you in absolute ignorance of my design."

Then, in my folly, I set myself to plead that she would intrust me with the whole affair; I would accomplish her wish at all hazards, and thus she would do naught to draw upon herself the wrath of Cadillac.

"No, no," she reiterated; "I will tell you no more than must needs be."

"You love the Bostonnais," I persisted.

"Oh, save him!" she said again. "All I ask is that you will tell him to seize upon the chance for life when it is offered him to-night."

And having thus answered me, she sped homeward towards the manor.

After she had left me, and soberer thoughts succeeded to the pained anger into which her admission of her love for the Englishman had put me, I came to my senses.

Already I had made more than one effort to succor the Bostonnais. I had sought my brother and begged his clemency; I had easily prevailed upon Frère Constantin to do the same. But the Commandant remained obdurate.

Now what had I promised? To become a party

to the escape of a condemned spy! No, I would not do it. What was this Englishman to me that I should jeopardize my honor for his sake? A rival who years ago, in a chance half-hour, gained the love of a little demoiselle just budding into womanhood, and then went away to dream idly of her, while I remained, to strive long and in vain for her favor. Yes, from the first she had loved the *Bostonnais*. The marriage with Chateauguay, arranged by my aunt Guyon, had been only a dream, and the *Bostonnais* remained the ideal of her youthful reveries.

My rival! One glance of those eyes blue as her own had to-night kindled into a flame the fire that had glowed so long in her pure heart, unsuspected in great measure even by herself. What was it to me that he had ventured into the region of *Le Détroit*, and now must expiate his gallant rashness?

Miladi would dim her pretty eyes with weeping for him; but it was a fancy, after all. What did she know of the man, save that he was brave and a gentleman? And of a verity, not knowing him at all, how could she really love him? It was not I who had condemned him to death, it was his own foolhardiness. But, once he was out of the way, would not Miladi's heart turn to me at last?

"No, it is not my fault that the Englishman must meet his fate," I told myself. "To save him I have done all I could in honor."

Howbeit, as I thus assured myself, there thrilled through me, like a sharp pain at my heart, the words Miladi had uttered with such pathetic despair, "What is it that you men call honor?"

My position was as if two swordsmen attacked me from either side and in parrying the thrust of the one I left myself defenceless against the blade of the other.

Two opposite courses were open to me. If I abetted in any way the escape of the prisoner, it would be a breach of fidelity towards my brother, an abuse of the confidence he reposed in me. But if I failed to keep my promise to Barbe, if I refused my aid to the Bostonnais, would I not be more culpable still, since it was to my advantage to be rid of this rival who stood between Miladi and me?

In keeping to the letter of the code of honor by refraining from giving to him the message that deliverance was at hand, would I not at the same time violate every law of chivalry and act the part of a base churl? What if I left him to his fate and he should be swept from my path; what if Barbe came to love me; what if some day I should call her wife! With my earthly happiness thus crowned, yet would not the spirit of this man rise up before me; would it not cry out against me, 'Churl, thou hast purchased thy bliss at an ignoble price'? As one drop of gall spoils a measure of honey, so the knowledge that in this hour with hatred in my heart I had held idly back, would embitter all my after life. And then, there was my promise to Miladi, given under the spell of her eyes, it is true, but still a promise. My brain was sadly confused, and I could not determine which course was right or wrong.

At length one thought fixed my resolve. Miladi, in her feminine rashness, had plotted I knew not what; this attempted rescue might fail, but it must not fail through me, because now it was not the life of the Bostonnais, nor yet mine that was at stake, it was the life of Barbe. Should aught mischance in her scheme, upon her fair head, upon her generous heart would fall the penalty. I hesitated no more, but praying that the just God would let the right

come to pass, I took the way to the captive with my inkhorn, portfolio, and quill.

The prison wherein the condemned man was to spend this night, decreed to be the last of his existence, was the blockhouse over the gate facing the river.

The guard having previously been apprised of my mission, admitted me without question, and mounting the stairs, I passed also the guard at the door above, and found myself in the long low room constructed as a place of refuge for the women and children of the fort in case of an attack from the savages, with strong walls to keep out an enemy or to shut one in, as the case might be.

The Bostonnais was pacing the floor with measured tread, as if telling off the paces between him and eternity. At the sound of my footstep he wheeled suddenly, as if on the alert against an assassin. Although his hours were numbered, he would fain die in the light of day, with the first rays of the sun shining upon him, and not be despatched quietly like a dog.

The flame of the pine torch I carried flashing into the darkness of the loft blinded him for the moment, but when he saw that I was his visitor, his face lighted up with a frank smile and he strode to meet me, saying, —

“ This is kind, Monsieur Guyon, and right gladly will I avail of your offer of pen, ink, and paper, though, if you will permit me, I will myself write down what I have to say. It is little enough. A farewell to my mother, — what grief comes to the mother of a son! — a message to the gentle lady whose tender heart was moved to compassionate my fate. Both, as must needs be, I shall leave unsealed,

that they may be read by whoso will. Otherwise it may be thought I have writ other news between the lines, especially in the letter to the south."

"It is a necessary precaution, monsieur," I answered, extending to him my hand, which he grasped warmly.

I then gave to him the writing materials. Sitting down upon the bench which ran along the sides of the blockhouse, he rested the portfolio upon his knee, and at once began to indite a letter, while I thrust the torch into a socket upon the wall.

"It was before Quebec I first saw service. 'Tis a strange fate that after the lapse of half-score years I should find a grave in a land over which floats the fleur-de-lis," he said presently, looking up from the paper whereon he had been writing with as steady a hand as though he were bidding his loved ones to his marriage feast.

"Ay, monsieur; war makes strange companions and allotments," I replied absently, for I was casting about in my mind as to how I should fulfil my promise to Barbe without creating in his mind too great a revulsion of feeling.

Ere many minutes he had finished the letter. A soldier's missive is apt to be brief. Moreover, these Bostonnais linger not over their adieux, even though they be for all time.

Before I had decided how to frame my speech he had taken up another length of the fair white paper I had brought to receive his last testament.

"May I ask how the lady is called?" he inquired with uplifted pen.

"Madame de Chateauguay," I replied tersely.

"Ah! I knew not that she was married," he sighed, throwing down the quill. "And yet, an arrant dolt I

was to suppose otherwise, since one so lovely must of a surety have attracted many eligible suitors."

"She is the widow of the noble Henri le Moynes, who was killed by the English or their allies the Iroquois some years since."

He sighed again, took up the pen, bit at its feather in indecision, and after a few moments of reflection continued, —

"At least it is only becoming that I should express to her my gratitude for her noble pleading of my cause."

"You have already done so, monsieur; however, if you wish to send her a message, I will pledge you my word that she shall have it —" I stopped short.

"Yes, after all is over," he said, thinking I was unwilling to refer to what was to take place at the rising of the sun. "When all is over! I pray the gentle lady's slumber may be deep in the early hours of to-morrow morning. I would not wish their peacefulness disturbed. Perchance, after all, the first sentence had been best."

There was something weird, to my thinking, in the calm manner wherewith he spoke of his approaching end, his sole anxiety being, seemingly, to shut out from the pretty ears of the Lady of Chateauguay the report of the volley of musketry that would bring him death.

"Your Frère Constantin has been here," he said in digression; "I am of a harsher creed than yours. But when these present matters are completed, and I am again alone, I will do as he counselled me, and turn my thoughts from the things of earth. Recalling the lessons my conscientious Puritan mother taught me in my early boyhood, I will prepare to meet my God."

"Madame de Chateauguay," he continued, going back to his writing — "what a gracious act it was, thus

to make the cause of an unknown soldier her own! This letter will disclose to her the name and lineage of the officer whom she strove to save from an inglorious fate. Yet destiny, or providence if you will, has decreed otherwise."

"Do not abandon all hope," I broke in abruptly. "The lady has not abated her interest; she is still minded to save you."

"What say you?" he exclaimed, springing to his feet. "Oh, beg her to desist! In her impetuosity in my behalf she will incur some fatal risk to herself. Say to her that I will not accept the aid which would compromise her and perchance imperil her life. Tell her it is an imputation upon my honor, since it seems she would assume that I fear death. Tell her a soldier would rather die when his heart beats high, his frame is stalwart, his grasp still strong, than live on to be mayhap set aside as too old to lead a command, to see the sword he loves so well drop from his palsied hand."

"Monsieur, I shall not see her again to-night," I said, "nor am I a party to her plan, save only that I pledged myself to deliver to you this message. That her attempt may fail is very like; therefore let not my words send back with too great a gladness the life blood through your veins. A brave man fears not death, yet the love of life is strong to the last in the nature of the most valiant. This only I will say, if the chance to escape is offered you and you let it pass, you are sure to bring great peril to the lady."

He hesitated, now for the first time undecided. "I will remember your counsel," he said at last. "Come what may, I will now write her my farewell; — it is also, I may almost say, my greeting."

Forthwith he sat down again and penned a few

lines which he handed me together with the letter to his mother, to be forwarded upon such occasion as might come in the future, after the missive should be, as he knew, carefully scanned by the Commandant. "Madame de Chateauguay! It is true, sir, what I avowed so inopportunately some hours since," proceeded the Englishman, who was become restless since my communication. "Ever since the day at Quebec when I first beheld this lady, a fair young maiden scarce more than a child, she has seemed my ideal of womanly loveliness, purity, and truth. Could I but venture to imagine that her gentle compassion sprang from even a passing interest in myself, did I but dare to think that the passionate love which burns in my heart finds even a transient reflection in hers, I should die happy. Die, I say, for I see not how her plan can succeed."

"A young maid's fancy is sometimes lightly caught, monsieur, and the lady has given you no small proof of her interest," I rejoined savagely. "Moreover, her marriage was arranged by her foster-mother, Madame Guyon."

"She calls me *Bostonnais*," he went on musingly, "and such indeed I am. Never have I beheld the land beyond the seas. The New World is the world I love; its spirit is my spirit. Ah, to woo and win this fair lady for my wife; to take her to the Tri-mountain city where I was born; to sail with her along the rocky coast where her forefathers and mine stepped ashore, after having crossed the ocean to escape from tyranny and injustice. Ah, to do this it would indeed be worth while to snatch again at the life that is so fast ebbing away from me!"

"Monsieur, if a man finds his prison door unlocked, his gaoler negligent, he is a fool if he does

not walk out; if good fortune waits without to lead him on, he is a fool if he does not accept her guidance. As for your dream castle, builded upon the verge of a precipice, I will remind you that the Lady of Chateauguay has suitors here in New France with whom you may have to reckon ere you can wed and take her away to your southern home."

The bitterness in my voice betrayed me. "You love her, too?" he cried, starting up and peering into my face. "You love her, yet you do not deny that I may have awakened an interest in her gentle heart! You risk discredit in the eyes of your Commandant to hold out a hope of rescue to me, a rival!" he exclaimed.

"Monsieur," I replied with dignity, "if it happens that you regain your liberty, if in time of peace you return to New France to seek the favor of this lady, it may be I shall have occasion to challenge you to a duel to the death. At present, it is because you are my rival that I feel your claim upon my honor is above every other."

For a moment he stared at me in silence.

"Monsieur Guyon, you are a noble gentleman," he said at length. "It is like enough you will not find me in your path after sunrise to-morrow. But if I am to live, I pray that I may not be outdone in generosity. It is, after all, the lady herself who will choose her husband, if she be inclined to take one. And if we must needs be rivals, at least there will be fair play between us."

"Good-night, monsieur," I said; and to my ears the words sounded truly a sad mockery. Yet how important was it, either for an escape into the wilderness or a journey to the next world, that the hours should deal well with him! "Good-night! It was in

my mind to stay with you if so you would have me, but now perchance it would serve you better for me to go."

"Good-night," he responded; "remember, to your hand I commit the letters. You will see by the superscription how that to my mother is to be sent. Farewell! or—I like your fine French word—adieu! A Dieu!"

It was now not far from twelve of the clock. The town was asleep, but as I approached the eastern gate I saw a light still in the house of Frère Constantin. Ah, well I knew the meaning of that light. It told me that the good Recollet was keeping one of his austere vigils; that he would spend the night in prayer for the stranger who had declined his ministrations, the gallant Bostonnais who was to die at sunrise.

Of a sudden my resolve was taken. I would not go outside the fort again ere dawn. I would watch near the manor, and when Barbe came forth upon her errand of succor, I would persuade her to give it all into my charge or, this failing, I would follow to protect and defend her if need should be.

But how poor a match is a man's dull brain against a woman's wit! Within the shadow of the house I waited. An hour passed; another slipped away, and still another. My heart reproached me in that I had aroused a delirious, vain hope of life in the breast of the prisoner, only to torture him the more in his last moments. The first light of dawn began to appear in the sky in the direction over against which lay Michilimackinac. Either the plot or Miladi's courage had failed. Escape for the Englishman was now impossible.

Assuming an air as if fresh awakened for the day,

I made my way to the blockhouse, hoping for a word with the prisoner when he should be brought out.

Everything there was silent. The doors were secured; the guards on duty.

Half an hour later a posse of soldiers came for the *Bostonnais*. The moment was come; he was to be led away and presently shot.

The doors were opened and they called to him to step forth.

He did not come.

Pardieu! What a commotion and confusion there was, then, what a *brouhaha* and excitement, while I stood by as astounded as the rest. For the prison was empty. The *Bostonnais* had disappeared, and not for many a day did we hear tale or tidings of him.

How *Miladi Barbe* compassed his escape; whether he went through the woods or by the great waters, east or west, she has never told me even to this time of my writing (1735). And if I had then my own thoughts upon the subject, I kept them to myself. After this lapse of years, however, without peril to her safety I may freely set down that in my opinion the *Lady of Chateauguay* was not far from me on that evening when I left the prison, and kept a watch on me so I might not discover her; that she sent a generous draught of *eau de vie* to the guards, a draught with which perchance was mingled a few drops of some harmless drug which yet induces sleep. During the brief time wherein they nodded at their post she herself released the prisoner, gave him an Indian blanket wherewith to disguise himself, and brought him through the water gate to the strand of the river. Either the guards at the shore had been stupefied by liquor too, or else *madame*, having gold

to cast away, had blinded them. Here she found the *coursur de bois* who had guided the party of Madame Cadillac through the forest, and who, smitten by the beauty of Miladi, was become her willing slave. To the guidance of this wanderer Miladi committed the *Bostonnais* officer, having required the wood-ranger to swear by all he held sacred that he would be faithful to the trust.

The two men stepped into a waiting canoe; the lady cut short the thanks and protestations of devotion which broke from her gallant countryman, and waved him an adieu while the boat shot away down the strait in the direction of the Lake of the Eries.

Then enveloped in her camlet-cloak, Barbe stole back through the darkness, and crouched among the trees until she saw me depart from the manor, when she re-entered the house by a window which she had left unbarred.

Such is my theory.

I will not attempt to depict the rage of the *Commandant* when he discovered that the *Bostonnais* was gone. In truth, I think the guards would have paid for their inebriety with their lives had not Barbe boldly declared that she alone was responsible for the escape of the English officer.

Had she been in any degree less beautiful, or had she not been the guest of his wife, I believe my brother would have shut her up in the blockhouse. As it was, she removed from the manor, and took up her residence with the wife of the *Sieur de Marsac*. In the spring by the first convoy she returned to the *St. Lawrence*.

The guards suffered a term of imprisonment, but later, Madame de Chateauguay, by presents to their wives and children, recompensed them, I judge,

for whatever ill fortune she brought upon them that night.

So, after avoiding me most pointedly during the winter, Barbe, at the breaking up of the ice, returned to Quebec. And, albeit my brother was still angered against her, she did him good service there at this critical time in his fortunes, by reporting much of his sagacious management of the fort, and laughing to scorn the pretensions of the company's commissioners, while she enlightened many as to the manner in which the three rogues had borne themselves during their stay at Le Détroit, — a revelation not wholly to the taste of the company, since "he sins as much who holds the bag as he who puts into it."

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOURTH

IN THE RECOLLET'S GARDEN

NOTWITHSTANDING all our preparations for defence, happily the Iroquois did not come. Our Hurons, Miamis, Outawas, and Pottawatomies went out to the hunt, and coming back in the spring with their wealth of beaver pelts and the fine skins of the otter, reported that nowhere, in their wanderings through the winter, had they crossed the trail of their hereditary enemies. Neither had they seen nor heard aught of the English.

Taking advantage of the peacefulness of the country, accordingly, the *Sieur Cadillac* set out for *Ville Marie* and *Quebec* to confront his opponents of the Trading Company, after telling the Indians of *Le Détroit* that he left his wife and children at *Fort Pontchartrain*, as a proof of his good will toward them.

Unfortunately, however, the absence of my brother *La Mothe* was prolonged beyond his expectation. Thus it came about that he sent for his family to come to him. At the same time a temporary commandant was appointed from *Montreal*, a hot-headed young officer, of whom I make mention only because of the happenings which his coming brought about.

This *Monsieur de Bourgmont* regarded the Indians but as a pack of hunting dogs. The *Chevalier de Cadillac*, having learned wisdom by experience, had shut up all the brandy in the cellars of his store-

houses, and it could be obtained by red men or white only in small quantities. Now, however, it flowed freely, and the new Commandant spent much of his time in carousing.

Upon the day of his arrival, as I was crossing the Place d'Armes, I encountered De Tonty.

"Pardieu," grumbled the morose captain, "it augurs not well for Le Détroit when so quarrelsome a soldier is sent down to us."

This gruff comment was uttered in the hearing of a group of Ottawa warriors who were come into the town to trade, Jean le Blanc, Le Pasant, and others, yet I scarce noted its effect as I continued on my way to the barracks. I was to continue my duties as secretary for the post. In the course of half an hour the chiefs came thither to salute the officer, as the representative of the power of the French.

"My faith, Monsieur Guyon, what is this?" asked De Bourgmont, with an impatience he took no trouble to conceal.

"A deputation of Indian sachems, who are come to pay you a visit of ceremony, Monsieur le Commandant," I replied.

His ejaculation thereat was more vigorous than courtly, for he was in speech most profane. Filing into the council room, the warriors ranged themselves before him.

"O chief," began Le Pasant, stepping forward and throwing back his blanket as a token of greeting, "since you are come in the name of Onontio, we welcome you to Le Détroit. Have you brought us good news? Is the heart of our Father turned to us? And Monsieur de la Mothe, when will he come again to Fort Pontchartrain?"

De Bourgmont had been looking over the accounts

of the fort. Angered at the interruption of his occupation, instead of replying to the Indians with the stateliness to which they are accustomed, he broke out brusquely, —

“ Sacré, I am not a wandering *coureur de bois* to bring you news. There are no commands for you from the Governor. As for the *Sieur Cadillac*, he is not like to return before another spring, if at all.”

This response, and still more the manner of the lieutenant, gave great offence to his visitors, as I saw. I did not know until afterwards, however, that it led them to believe the displeasure of Governor Vaudreuil was to be visited upon the Outawas for the killing of some Iroquois allies of the French at *Catarocouy*, and that for this reason my brother *De La Mothe* had summoned his wife and children to *Quebec*.

There was already enmity between some of the savage villages of *Le Détroit*, and a short time before a band of *Miamis* had killed several Outawas while they were away on the hunt.

Of this state of affairs I felt it my duty to warn *De Bourgmont*.

Flattering himself that he could easily right matters, he assembled the Outawas and proposed to them that they join the *Miamis*, *Iroquois*, and *Hurons* against the *Sioux*. This, it seems, they regarded as a pretext for delivering them into the power of their enemies. However, the war-dance was held, and all the warriors of *Le Détroit* ostensibly prepared to take the war-path against the *Sacs* and *Foxes*.

It was a beautiful afternoon of early June. I had gone to the house of *Monsieur de Bourgmont* to assist him with some correspondence.

The new *Commandant* had brought down many

fine furnishings from the St. Lawrence, and also his wife, La Chenette, a bold, black-eyed woman, whom, notwithstanding her good looks and rich attire, the ladies of the post declined to visit.

Madame de Bourgmont was not present on this occasion, nor was she usually when I went there; and the Commandant and I kept steadily at work on the papers.

Of a sudden, looking up, I beheld a dusky face staring in at the window. It was gone as quickly, but anon reappeared.

This time De Bourgmont saw it, too, and reached for his fusee which stood in the corner behind him.

I laughed.

"The owner of that copper-colored visage has no sinister design in his prying, monsieur," I said. "It is only Techeret, an Indian idler about the town who is fond of peering in at our domiciles thus, for our furnishings of civilization are ever a source of curiosity and wonder to the children of the woods."

Doubtless there would have been no more of the matter but for a most unfortunate happening.

A fine dog, belonging to the new Commandant, was stretched on the gallery basking in the sunlight. The footstep of the savage was noiseless, but the hound had scented the stranger and now warned him off by a low growl.

Techeret paid small heed to the challenge. Once again I caught sight of his grinning face at the window. The next moment the dog must have dashed around the corner of the house and sprung upon him, for there was a fierce snarl, then the sound of a blow, and the wounded animal dashed into the room where we were, and crouched yelping by the chair of his master.

With an oath the Commandant sprang to his feet, caught up the fusee, rushed out of the door, and seizing upon the Indian, in an ungovernable fury beat him about the head with the butt of the musket.

"Monsieur de Bourgmont, have a care; if you kill the Outawa you will bring down upon the fort the vengeance of the tribe," I cried, laying hold of him and exerting my strength to pull him away. He was a big, burly man, so that the physical advantage was greatly in his favor, and the Indian having been unprepared for the attack was already stunned and tottering.

I clung to De Bourgmont. In vain he strove to shake me off. He was frothing at the mouth when I disarmed him and thrust him back into the house.

The luckless Techeret had, however, fallen senseless upon the ground.

By this time all the Outawas in the village had got wind of the trouble, and now gathered around their brother. I called for water; I tried to make some excuse for the Commandant. "He did not know that our dwellings are ever open to our brothers of the forest," I said; "it is not so in Montreal." I reminded them that Techeret had injured the dog. In silence they bent over the prostrate redman. They found him dead. They carried him away, and were still ominously silent.

The next day was one of those perfect days in June when Nature is at her loveliest. Not a cloud appeared in the sun-lit heavens; a balmy wind came sweeping up from the Lake of the Eries and rippled the river, which shone like pliant silver. The glad songs of the robin, the oriole, the bluebird, and the

meadow-lark filled the air with melody. The verdant banks of the strait, the lawns of the King's Esplanade were far more beauteous in their velvety green than the carpets of Versailles.

At the early-morning Mass in the church of "the good Ste. Anne" the choicest of the forest blossoms and of the garden blooms of the fort breathed forth their fragrance before the shrine.

The little woodland sanctuary seemed never to me more peaceful. I missed indeed the clear, sweet voice of Barbe, who was wont to lead the chanting of the Indian girls, and the rich contralto of Thérèse. I missed the stately presence of my brother Monsieur de Cadillac, whose raised chair stood vacant in the chancel, for De Bourgmont troubled not himself to come hither. The other officers were present, however, and the soldiers also, it being a matter of discipline.

There were now a number of ladies at the fort, for some of our young nobles had gone back to Quebec for wives, and these pious ladies had no need of military command to enforce their attendance at the services in the church.

Present too were a good number of settlers' wives, and the settlers themselves, come to ask a blessing upon their fields.

I saw as well many dark-hued faces among the worshippers, though these belonged chiefly to squaws, Indian girls, and children; the feather-crested warriors' heads sometimes seen about the door or thrust in at the windows, minding me of the bas-reliefs of bronze I had noted in the cathedral of Paris, being to-day absent.

The service was over, and the good missionary turned to pronounce a benediction upon his people.

Was the gentle radiance that illumined his benign countenance a reflection of the sunlight? Or was it rather as the glow of a flame shining through a lamp of alabaster, the shining forth of a soul that has communed with God?

On this morning, at least, as I looked upon him, remarking the touch of time upon his thinning locks, which I remembered as once so dark and luxuriant; the lines wrought by care and toil, by fastings and vigils upon his gaunt visage, — I bethought me that the story writ thereon was a record any man might reverence and envy. For what is there in all the world so beautiful as the record of a life well lived, the soul history of a man who has been faithful to his noblest ideals!

Homeward we went together, he and I, to the morning meal. How often since have I recalled every minute occurrence of that forenoon! His chat at table, grave over the subject of the Indian troubles, hopeful as he looked forward to the return of *Sieur Cadillac*, cheery as the sunshine, the song of birds, and the music of the river, the cheerfulness of a spirit whose tranquil depths were pure and sweet as the clear waters of the strait.

After the simple breaking of our fast, the *curé*, taking his breviary, went out into his garden, while I remained indoors to indite a letter to *La Mothe*, telling him that matters at the fort were not as he would have them, and urging him not to remain away a day longer than must needs be. The *coureur de bois Sans Souci* was to set out for *Montreal* within the week, and I was minded to have my missive ready to send by him.

Having writ the letter, all but the close, since I would fain leave it open until the last minute, to add the

latest news, I prepared to go up to the barracks and set about my duties as amanuensis of the Commandant.

As I stepped into the garden, Frère Constantin was standing among his flowers, looking down at them as one looks into the innocent faces of little children, with a tenderness and love for their brightness and beauty; and talking to them with the naïve simplicity which I have noted more than once in men of high intellect and introspective nature.

Anon some three or four Indian boys put their unshorn heads in at the gate to peer at him. A moment after, culling among his floral treasures with a reckless generosity, he strode to the opening in the palisade, and put into the hands of the young redskins the gaudy blooms that pleased them best.

"Frère Constantin, Frère Constantin, would you defraud Ste. Anne of her flowers?" I cried to him with a laugh; for well I knew he gave so much pains to the cultivation of the little parterre that there might ever be blooms for the decoration of the church.

"I think the good Ste. Anne would have done the same herself; she loved all children for the Virgin's sake," he answered for excuse.

"But you have even plucked the blossoms of the 'holy herb' (verbena), the flowers you have watched for days in the hope that they would unfold for the coming of the Sunday."

"Yes, yes," he admitted, nodding absently. "You see, Normand, the Indian children like those scarlet blossoms best."

"Frère Constantin," I said, shaking a finger at him in affectionate raillery, "to pleasure these beggarly savages you have robbed the altar of the Lord."

He laughed, as a boy laughs who has been caught in some innocent dilemma. But his discomfiture was of short duration.

"Well, well, Normand, it may be that I have," he avowed contentedly; "since God grudges not His bounty, why should we? We pray for daily bread, but does He not grant us daily food for heart and eye as well? Why do the flowers fade so soon but that each day He may send down new beauty upon the earth? 'Tis a law of their growth; the more blooms you cull, the more the plant puts forth. It is only when the gardener is niggardly and clings avariciously to his floral wealth that it fails him. Nature is generous to prodigality. There is no miser upon the earth but man. If we have not new blooms of the 'holy herb,' for the Sunday, there will be fourfold the number betimes. The Lord will provide for His altar. Have you not noted in the forest that where one strong tree is cut down another presently begins to grow? Ever this will continue so long as the living roots remain in the ground."

Here the good father bent over a patch of iris. "No need to ask the flower you fain would have as a favor for your coat," he said, plucking and reaching up to me two or three sprays of the delicate white fleur-de-lis.

"I care to wear no other," I answered, fastening them over my heart, "unless indeed it be a bit of arbutus or a posie of violets."

"But the arbutus and violets are gone," argued Frère Constantin.

"Yes, they are gone," I responded with a sigh.

My friend regarded me with kindly solicitude; he knew that to me the violets and arbutus meant only Barbe.

"For you they will come again, Normand, be not cast down," he said delicately.

"They belong to the south; there is left to me now naught but the iris. I will wear only the fleur-de-lis, but I will wear it with pride," I rejoined.

Frère Constantin smiled and nodded to his flowers, as if confiding to them his gentle opinion of the unreasonableness of human passion. "Yes, yes, my son, wear worthily the fleur-de-lis, at all hazards," he counselled; "it is a badge of honor, of patriotism. Yet in gilding the lily the Bourbons have too often forgotten its whiteness. Wear it, Normand, as the emblem of St. Louis, a knight without fear and without reproach."

"I, too, love the fleurs-de-lis," he continued, thrusting a spray of the graceful blossoms into the bosom of his soutane. "I love them because to me they are redolent of happy memories of New France and of the mother country beyond the seas. I would fain die with them upon my breast. And then, they mind me of my own land also. You know, the emblem of La Bella Firenze, of beautiful Florence, is the iris, too,—not the pale fleur-de-lis we have here, but the stately crimson iris from the Levant."

"Ah, Normand, give not your heart too much to vain regrets," he proceeded after a pause. "I, too, was young once, and the love of life and earthly happiness beat high in my breast." He broke off abruptly.

"Yes, my Father," I cried with ardor. "Full well I know that in your fair Land of Flowers you were the heir of a princely race. A young cavalier of brilliant talents, versed in all the accomplishments of the time, you were from early boyhood betrothed to a beautiful demoiselle, the daughter of a family as

distinguished as your own, and your future promised to be ideally happy," I went on, astonished at my own temerity. "I have heard how its brightness was swept away by the Black Death that passed over Florence, changing its palaces into pest-houses, its laughter and gayety into lamentations, and leaving the city one vast tomb. How you awoke in your ancestral home to find that your parents were fallen victims to the plague, your betrothed was become the bride of death. I have been told that in the sorrow which threatened your reason, there arose before you at times, as through a mist, the saintly face of a venerable Recollet monk who long before had charmed your boyish fancy and warmed your young heart to enthusiasm by a rehearsal of the wonderful experiences of the missionaries of St. Francis in the wilds of New France. And thus it came about that, seeking solace, you knocked at the gate of the Recollet monastery on the margin of the Arno, and were admitted among the brethren."

"Ay, and there found peace and true happiness in a new and nobler life," mused my good friend, absently. Then rousing himself, he added in a different tone, "Chut, chut, boy! I know not who in the past has entertained you with these idle tales. The sequel is far more to my liking. For ten years I labored in the monastery at Florence. Then I was sent to France, and from there I crossed the seas to Ville Marie. Of the rest you have personal knowledge. Verily, my son, I must be getting old to be thus garrulous. Here I have detained you a full half-hour, when you would fain have gone to the Commandant."

"I am still early," said I, lightly; "Monsieur de Bourgmont will yet scarce have breakfasted. But I

am keeping you from the pruning of your shrubs and plants. In truth, my Father, you have made the wilderness to bloom as the rose."

"Ay, ay! Given good soil, one can with patient care cause the wildest spot to blossom into beauty," he rejoined.

Again he was the humble Recollet, all other days and other lands forgotten for his present work here at the edge of the forest.

At the gate of the palisade which, as I have said, surrounded the house, I was met by a horde of little redskins with hostile design upon the parterre of the missionary.

"Here is another swarm of these red pests," I called back to him; "best disperse them with a homily, as the saint of Assisi was wont to dismiss the wild birds of the woods, and then, I pray you, shut the gates, my friend, or, better still, come to the fort. The Indians are evil-minded these times, and, to judge from the howling echoes of the war-songs chanted in their villages last night, from their gruesome preparations for taking the war-path against the Sioux, it is not safe for you to remain here, at least unless protected by the palisade."

He waved me a serene "au revoir," saying quietly:

"Fear not, Normand, my life is as safe among the Indians as at the fort. The red men are my people also. My gate must remain open. They must be free to come to me to-day of all others. Were I to go among them now and harangue them, they would not listen to me. But when they see me here engaged in the peaceful cultivation of the earth, it may reassure them that the French are peaceably inclined toward them."

Thus I left the good curé working among his flowers.

Ah, did I but dream what would be the outcome of the forenoon, how different would have been my course!

As I went my way, I encountered Sans Souci, and learned from him that the Outawas had already taken to the woods, but the warriors of the other tribes had not yet gone.

At the barracks I spent the remainder of the morning in the preparation of the documents for Monsieur de Bourgmont.

It was close on to noon when we at the fort heard an outcry from the forest.

At the behest of the Commandant, some two or three of us mounted to the blockhouse over the prairie gate, and descried, fleeing across the meadows to the enclosure, some five or six Indians whom we recognized as Miamis, with a band of foes who could be none other than Outawas in hot pursuit.

With all haste we called the news to the officers and soldiers below, and De Bourgmont ordered the guard to throw open the gate to the fugitives.

Before the wretched Miamis could gain the security of the palisade, the pursuers fell upon them and killed all save one, a young brave who outstripped them in fleetness. Him we drew in, spent and despairing.

"The Outawas are slaying our people," he panted, and then fell to the ground fainting from exhaustion.

This alarm was scarce given when all the Miamis who were still in their village, men, women, and children made direct for the refuge of our stronghold. The next moment all the Outawa warriors, having returned from the war-path, dashed out of the neighboring groves upon them.

Our Commandant gave an order, and the Outawas were met by a sharp fire from the garrison; several

were killed, but the band, instead of being turned back, became more infuriated than before.

The house of Frère Constantin stood farther up the brow of the hill, a little apart from the fort. He had mentioned to me some two hours earlier that he intended to lay out some plots at the rear of the dwelling. He might not know of the wrath of the savages. "Frère Constantin! I must go to warn him," I cried.

"Impossible," exclaimed Dugué; "the curé must shut himself up behind his palisade and there wait until this hurricane has swept by. It may destroy him; but no one can hope to reach him now."

"I must go," I reiterated, tearing myself from the grasp of the gallant officer, and knowing full well he would have said no word to deter me had not the exigency been indeed desperate.

"Monsieur de Guyon, the savage hounds will run you down as they would a fox," seconded Jolicœur. You must needs be fleeter than an arrow, you must have the wings of the wind, to reach the house of the Recollet alive."

"I *will* go," I cried, breaking from them and dashing through a postern from which a by-path led to the church and the cabin of the curé.

The spiked door closed again with a thud, and, as I sped away, I heard the guard let the heavy bar fall into place.

I was locked out, and might find the gate of the palisade about the Recollet's house barred, after all. Of this only was I certain, I was alone on the prairie and could not hope to get across the space between the fort and the cabin of Frère Constantin without being perceived by the maddened Outawas, who, undismayed by the fate of those shot down, were

coming on toward the settlement with the fury of a wind storm.

Yet I must reach the Recollet, if possible, or at least get near enough to warn him, my friend, my more than brother, my father in affection, my hero, who doubtless knew nothing of the uprising, for he was become hard of hearing of late, by reason of exposure to the rains during a missionary journey. Spurring my strength with the ardor of my anxiety, I kept on at my utmost speed. But alas, all too soon a diabolical whoop announced that the bloodthirsty savages had caught sight of me. A moment after, with a fiendish yell, they were after me like a pack of ferocious wolves.

A flight of arrows whizzed past or fell about me like the pelting of the winter's hail; I felt a stinging pain in my side, but still, dazed and wounded, I stumbled on with only one thought, to reach and save Frère Constantin.

How little, at best, we can do for those whom we love! Gladly would I have given my life for him, yet every second I felt myself growing weaker.

Was it in vain that I cried out?

Was it possible that he whose defect of hearing was scarce perceptible in ordinary converse, was rendered more deaf by this confusion and din of shrieking savages?

There he appeared now in the garden. In God's name, why did he not bar the gate?

Merciful Heaven! he was coming out. Was it for my sake? Was I to be the cause of his death, after all?—I, who sought to warn him! Why did he come running toward me? I could never gain the palisade alive! The mind is fleet at such times. My senses were all upon the alert. A voice seemed to

call in my ear that I could save him yet, either by letting myself be torn to pieces by the savages before his eyes, or by falling upon the ground as if I were slain. The latter was no difficult rôle to enact, for I was faint from my wound; if he saw me fall, thinking me dead (and how could the life of any one be preserved against that rain of arrows!), thinking me dead, he would bar the gate and gain for himself protection, at least for the time. Once more an arrow struck me; I could no longer see. With a last shout to my friend to save himself, I cast my body flat upon the ground.

The foremost of the Indians were close upon me; I was sure that my final moment was come and they would have my scalp.

But these demons passed me by; they were so insanely eager to wreck their fury upon the gentle curé. My God! had he barred the gate? With this cry in my heart I lost consciousness; had the Indians who came after taken my scalp, I would not have known, and would scarce have felt their barbarity.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIFTH

THE RED LILIES

I MUST have been dead a long time. So it seemed to me when I came back to a life of hot tossings upon my couch and fierce struggles to arise and be about my work, — struggles wherein I was ignominiously worsted by Gaspard and even by Jules, the little Pani slave, — struggles wherein the voice of Cadillac ordered me to drink a sleeping potion with as great sternness as if he commanded a body of soldiery in an expedition against the savages. At other times, however, when I lay exhausted, glad enough to remain motionless, the tones of our *Sieur* were gentle as a woman's.

But there was a woman about, too, and I called her name Barbe; yet it was not Barbe, as I soon learned.

For there was an end to this strange time also, and at last I came to my real self, or rather, a wreck of what I had been. I awoke to see La Mothe's little daughter Thérèse come softly stealing into the room, where I lay upon a bed spread with cool sheets of linen, for the air was soft, as in late summer, and albeit a grateful whiff of breeze from the river found its way in through the vine-shaded window, I vaguely decided that, out under the sun, the day must be stifling hot.

Idly I watched the child, wondering if this might be another dream.

The next moment she caught my gaze fixed intently upon her, and with a frightened cry fled beyond the curtain of the doorway.

Presently I heard the woman's voice that had haunted my fevered fancy, a voice which I now recognized.

It was not Barbe, but Madame Cadillac, who drew back the curtain and coming quickly to me, took my hand in hers.

I heaved a sigh, and then my heart smote me that I could be so indifferent to the anxiety depicted upon the countenance of my dear Thérèse. What other woman save my mother had ever been to me so kind, so unselfish, so loving, as this dear sister!

She bent over me and lightly touched my forehead with her lips, but putting my arms about her neck, I drew her face down to mine and kissed her sweet mouth with brotherly affection.

"Ah, Normand," she said, "this is a happy day, for the fever has left you. Now you will soon grow strong again."

"Yes, yes," I faltered, "but what of Frère Constantin?"

"Oh! all is well with him," Thérèse answered evasively.

I was not satisfied.

"Did—did he close the gate?" I asked, sitting up, whereat a wave of excitement swept over me, followed by a sense of confusion, and a determination to be off to the house of the Recollet with all speed.

"Come, Normand, rest your head upon this pillow, and I will tell you about our dear Father del Halle," entreated my sister; and thereat she pushed me down as if I were a man of straw.

"Well! Did he close the gate?" I repeated fretfully.

"Normand, you know Frère Constantin would never have closed the gate while there remained any suffering human being outside."

"But I was dead," I objected.

She only shook her head.

"And did the Indians attack him?" I urged.

"They were a party of young braves wild with fury and a thirst for blood; they remembered not that the missionary had ever been the friend of their people. They fell upon him —"

Here I interrupted my sister with a loud cry and plucked at the bandages of my wounds to tear them off.

"Listen, Normand," pleaded she, calling for Gaspard in great alarm. "Will you not listen? The savage young Outawas had bound the curé, and mayhap they meant to kill him; but the older chiefs, Jean le Blanc and Le Pasant, came up at the moment. They cut the bonds of our dear Frère Constantin, and Jean le Blanc prayed him to go and tell Monsieur de Bourgmont that the Outawas meant no ill to the French, that their quarrel was with the Miamis. Jean le Blanc besought him to beg the Commandant to stop the garrison from firing upon the Outawas."

"And did he go?" I queried, starting up again.

"He set out for the fort at once," replied Madame Cadillac.

"And the firing was stopped?"

"The firing straightway ceased. Now be satisfied. You shall hear no further to-day," concluded my sister, with decision.

"One word more," I implored. "Barbe, is she here?"

"Not yet," answered Thérèse, rejoiced, I could see, because I dwelt no more upon the theme of the Outawa uprising. "No, Barbe is in Quebec, but I hope she will soon come down to me; therefore you must make haste to grow strong, Normand, against her coming. Ah! here is little Thérèse again with a small portion of pigeon-broth that Gaspard has intrusted to her. Proud, indeed, she is to be your cup-bearer!"

How could I decline the food when it was so prettily offered by the kind, tiny hands of the child! The little Hebe stood by until I had taken the last drop of the broth, stamping her baby foot in command when once I hesitated; but it was Madame Cadillac who held the cup to my lips and encouraged me.

Erelong, however, I was hungry enough, and able also to sit for a while daily by the vine-wreathed window.

Then I began to wonder why Barbe delayed so strangely. How her sweet companionship would have brightened those weary days of convalescence!

At length a solution of the puzzle occurred to me, and I upbraided myself for having been so slow to see. Barbe did not come, either because she awaited news of the Bostonnais, or else she had gone south to be married to him.

Yes, she had gone to the friends of her girlhood, to the wife of Mr. Davis, or the ladies who were once the Demoiselles Clarke. From the home of one of these friends her wedding with the English officer would take place. It was plain enough why she cared no more for Le Détroit.

Well, if she was joyously content, what mattered aught else? To secure her happiness, had I not risked all that was far dearer to me than life? Why should

I be so ungenerous now as to indulge this insane jealousy?

I spoke no word to my patient nurse nor to any one else of my discovery, but I became dull in spirits.

"Where is Frère Constantin?" I asked many times; "why does he not come to visit me?"

To this inquiry Thérèse always gave the same reply: "Have patience; Father del Halle was wounded by the Indians. All is well with him now. When you are recovered, you shall go to the house of the Recollet if you wish."

One day, being now much recuperated, I besought Madame Cadillac to take a little of the rest she so greatly needed, and leave the Pani boy, Jules, to wait upon me.

After some demur she went away for an hour's repose, as I begged, and Jules took his place behind my chair with a branch of maple for a fan to cool the air, and also to drive away the flies that buzzed about me in tantalizing fashion.

"Jules," said I, turning to him abruptly, and with my hand arresting the waving of the green branch, "is the curé so ill that he cannot come to see me?"

"My faith, no, Monsieur Guyon," answered the boy, standing rigid as a figure wrought in bronze, though his bright eyes shone with interest; "no, my master, Monsieur le Curé is not ill now at all. Monsieur le Curé was here many times while my master was in the fever."

"He is not ill! Then why does he not come here when I am better?" I queried, wondering.

"The Pani knows not, but perhaps it is that my master should not be troubled," suggested the boy.

I laughed.

"Jules, it will not trouble me to see Monsieur le Curé," I said. "Madame Cadillac is resting and must not be disturbed; do as I bid you. Go find the curé and ask him to come to me at once. Go, do not be afraid to leave me; I want nothing."

Obedient as a spaniel, the lad sped away, and I set myself to wait.

Half an hour passed. Content that I had carried my point and was again master of my own actions, and in tranquil expectation of seeing so soon the face of my friend, the face of Frère Constantin, — a little worn perchance from his recent illness, but still the cheerful, noble countenance I loved, — soothed by these thoughts, I must have fallen asleep in my chair.

All at once I was aroused by the voice of Jules, saying, "This way, mon père, my master is here; this way, if you please."

A rich voice made some response, — a pleasant, musical voice, but it was unfamiliar; it was not the voice for whose tones I longed.

Startled, I opened my eyes and turned my head, looking toward the gallery whereon my room bordered.

A minute later there appeared in the doorway a benign figure in a gray robe and cowl, — a Recollet, but not the friend for whom I waited; a stranger, not Frère Constantin.

"Here, my master, here is Monsieur le Curé," joyously cried the childish treble of the Pani boy.

In that moment I realized the truth which had been kept from me. My friend Frère Constantin was dead; another was curé of Ste. Anne's.

I remember no more of this afternoon; they told me afterwards that with a cry of grief I fell forward out of the chair, insensible.

The little slave, ingenuously thinking I would fain speak to the curé for the welfare of my soul, had run to bring him, and the latter had come with ready kindness. But alack, the shock of that meeting was wellnigh the undoing of those weeks of convalescence; for my wound opened and the fever returned. In the confused hours which followed I sometimes distinguished the voice and face of the good man who was come to us in the place of him who was gone, and his words soothed my sorrow; nathless it was long ere I could ask the question that was in my mind.

One morning, however, when I awoke sane again, and found Thérèse watching beside me, I said, taking her hand in mine, —

“Tell me now, Thérèse, about Frère Constantin.”

“I will tell you all, Normand,” she answered tearfully.

“On that day of June (we are now well into August), on that day, warned by your cry, Father del Halle left his flowers and ran to meet you. Many blamed him that he did not return when he saw you fall, to all appearance dead. We understand, he could not do it. The fiendish young Outawas, maddened by rage at seeing their companions fired upon from the fort, dragged the Recollet back into the peaceful, blooming garden. Three times they stabbed him and then bound him; inhumanly glad to have secured so important a hostage.

“But Jean le Blanc coming up, as I told you, reproached the young men for what they had done and cut the bonds of the missionary.

"Jean le Blanc says that then, forgetting the wounds of the curé, he begged the priest to go to Monsieur de Bourgmont and beseech him to stop the firing. Frère Constantin uncomplainingly set out, but, weakened by loss of blood, he toiled along with difficulty.

"Some five or six soldiers rushed out to meet him and to bring you in, Normand, though you were thought to be killed. The Outawas had been driven back, but, just as the little party of rescuers reached the gate on their return, the big chief Le Pasant from behind a bush of sumach fired into the group. He had aimed at the soldiers, but the bullet struck the Recollet, killing him on the instant.

"Sadly they brought him into the fort and to the manor. On his breast, they say, together with the cross of his Order, they found a spray of fleur-de-lis whose once white petals were dyed red with his life blood. He rests in consecrated earth beneath the trees yonder. Shall we go there together when you walk out?"

I bowed my head; I could not speak for emotion, as I thought of my friend, the humble Recollet, a hero to the last,—Frère Constantin, who, quickly pardoning the ill-use, the wounds the savage Outawas inflicted upon him, went forth so promptly to help those who had insulted and stabbed him; yes, he saved them, yet only to meet death at their hands.

"And I? The more you tell me, the more I marvel that I still live," I said at last.

"A soldier bore you in, almost to the gate, and then another took his place," replied my sister.

Busied with memories of my friend, I asked no more. It was some days before I learned that the man to whom under providence I owed the continuance of my existence was the sergeant, Jean Joly, who

was shot down by Le Pasant also, with the fusee which Monsieur de Tonty a short time before had foolishly permitted the Indian to buy from the King's storehouse.

Alas, poor Jolicœur! He gave his life for me! And I had not thought to ask for him during all these weeks.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIXTH

WAMPUM AND VERMILION

OUR Sieur Cadillac had returned to Le Détroit in triumph. Not only was he acquitted of the company's charges that he had infringed their rights, but orders had come from France depriving them of all privileges on the straits, and restoring to La Mothe his former authority, with permission to carry on all the trade of the region.

Having brought back with him a garrison of two hundred men, besides a hundred new settlers, he now set himself to inquire into the causes of the Indian outbreak, and to bring the Outawas to an understanding of their crime in having so barbarously requited the labors of the gentle Recollet. To this latter end he summoned a great council of the chiefs.

Never shall I forget the scene of the assembly, — the Indians wearing their crowns of eagle's feathers with the dignity of princes; their brown faces daubed with vermilion and ochre, white lead and soot. Besides their bright-hued blankets, they were clad but in the breach-cloth of deerskin, leggins trimmed with small silver bells, and moccasins gay with porcupine quills. The bodies of several were painted in many colors. Others had traced in white clay a lace-like pattern upon their skins, as if upon the seams of a coat, — a pattern that at a little distance might be taken for argent lace. Their breasts were

adorned with necklaces of wampum; their arms with bracelets of silver. Some wore strings of silver half-moons graduated in size from one to several inches, hanging from neck to ankles both in front and down the back; and the Outawas had, in addition to their other adornment, a little stone suspended from the nose. Altogether, they presented a terrible picture of savage power.

On the other side of the hall were ranged the officers of the fort in all the grandeur they were wont to display on such occasions, to keep up the prestige of the French.

The council being formally opened by the Commandant, Jean le Blanc, eager to present his plea that he was not to blame for the tragedy at the fort, begged leave to speak.

"My father," he began, "we have been to Quebec to see Onontio, but he has sent us back to you. I will say to you now what I said to Onontio. We killed ourselves when we killed the Gray Robe, the child of the Great Father who gives us life. Have pity on us. We have killed the Gray Robe, but we hope to bring him to life again. Not with necklaces and furs, for I know well that though we might have a houseful of them they would not be a recompense for the blood of our father. What then can I do? I can only satisfy you, my father, by giving you two captives, who are of our own blood, since we have adopted them. Receive them, my father, to cover the blood of the Gray Robe; else take my body. I can offer you nothing more; have pity upon me! Restore tranquillity to the lakes and rivers, that all the children of Onontio may be in peace, and may cook their meat and drink of the wave with all safety. My father Talon, whom you

call the Rat, was the first chief who came from the Upper Lakes to find the French. Onontio gave him the key to the door of trade that led to them. It is the Outawas who have killed the Gray Robe, by mistake indeed, yet we have killed him and the soldier. But I have come at the bidding of Onontio. I am a child of obedience; I have come, if need be, to die with my brother the Gray Robe."

When the Outawa warrior had finished, Monsieur de Cadillac rose, and, adapting his mode of expression to the manner of the savages, made to them the following address, whereof I have kept a faithful transcript:—

"Jean le Blanc, Kinonge, and all of you, hear me. Monsieur de Vaudreuil writes me that he leaves me master of peace, and bids me do as I think best to restore tranquillity to the nations. Otontagon, hear me! I have lighted a great fire. I have planted four beautiful trees near this fire, two on my right hand and two on my left. Outawas, you are the largest tree. I have said to myself, 'It is well. I will repose under the shadow of this tree; there I shall have only good thoughts.' Could I believe that any one had attached to the top of this tree a sharp and heavy hatchet, which I did not see, because it was covered with foliage? While I slept peacefully and dreamed only of peace, a wicked bear climbed to the top of this tree. He shook it with all his might, and the hatchet fell upon my cabin and crushed it.

"When I saw my cabin in ruins, my heart was displeased and I said, 'I will cut down this tree, I will root it out, I will reduce it to ashes.' But afterwards I said, 'Why destroy this tree, its leaves and its fruit? I pity the women and children. This

drunken bear has done all the mischief; he must die, and I will give the others life.'

"Outawas, listen to me. I demand that you deliver up to me Le Pasant, him whom you call the wicked bear; he it was who with his own hand killed the Gray Robe. Bring him hither, and give me full power over him, to grant him life or put him to death. If he refuses to embark, I command you to cut off his head in your own village. Outawas, avoid the perils that threaten you. Have pity on your women and children. I must have your reply by the going down of the sun. Onontio and I have one heart and the same thoughts; he will confirm all I do, whether for peace or for war."

The chiefs withdrew, to ponder the words they had heard, as was the custom, but in the afternoon of the same day they returned, and Jean le Blanc made answer to our Sieur.

"My father," said he, "the bear that you ask us to deliver up is very powerful in our village. He has strong alliances with all the nations of the lakes. He is a great tree. Who is strong enough to root it up? But, my father, since your heart is hard as a rock, we must obey you. Send a boat with us to Michilimackinac, and we will put Le Pasant into it. If he refuses to embark, we will cut off his head. He is my brother, my own brother, yet what can I do. You must be obeyed; that is what we have decided among ourselves."

"Otontagon, it is well," replied De la Mothe; "for Monsieur de Vaudreuil has said to me that the two captives whom you have brought, though adopted by you, are of foreign blood. Father Recollet and the soldier were of my blood, my own blood. Onontio has told you that you should have brought

him the head of *Le Pasant*. This bear who dreams upon his mat only of making war must not spoil your peaceful spirit. When you have delivered him up to me, you shall have peace, your women and children will rejoice, and I will forget the mischief you have done me."

The following day the Commandant held another council at which were present the Hurons, the Miamis, and two chiefs of the Kiskakons who arrived with a white flag from Michilimackinac, to the surprise of every one.

The presence of these last was not reassuring, since they were the most powerful allies of the Outawas. Nevertheless Cadillac addressed them with severity.

"What brings you here, Onaské?" he demanded of the older chief. "Did Onontio tell you to come? Are we friends?"

"My father," replied Onaské, "I go everywhere with my head lifted up, because I never have any bad affairs; I said within myself, 'My father at *Le Détroit* knows me; I risk nothing by going to see him.'"

"Onaské, how dare you say you have no bad affairs?" inquired La Mothe, sternly. "Did not your nation come hither to aid the Outawas who have killed me? You are very bold to come here while my land is still smoking with my blood and that of my children. When chiefs grow old, they are wont to grow wise, but you have grown foolish. What is your true reason for coming to *Le Détroit*?"

"My father," responded Onaské, seeing that concealment was useless, "it is misery that has caused us to throw ourselves into your arms. We are

wretched. Our children have eaten grass all summer; we are compelled to boil it and drink the soup. Misery is a strange thing. I have risked everything, even death, but I will die by the hand of my father, or perhaps he will pity me. By reason of the wars we shall have no maize this year, and our children will die. But for me, our whole nation would have come to Le Détroit; I said to them, 'Be patient and await my return.'"

"Onaské, if you die of famine, it is not my affair," rejoined Cadillac, with an appearance of great displeasure. "You have killed my children, you have struck me, and Heaven punishes you for it. Go away! you are very bold."

After a parley with the Hurons, a last general council was held.

Monsieur de la Mothe, in opening it, first addressed the Outawas.

"Jean le Blanc, Kinonge, and the other chiefs know the promise you have made me," he said. "Onaské, Koutaouiliboe, listen while Otontagon tells you the result of the councils, that you may decide what to do. Have pity on your children who have eaten grass all summer, and for whom you have felt such tenderness that you were willing to risk your life by coming here."

Otontagon then related the demand of my brother, and the promise the Outawas had given him.

"Otontagon, my nephew," answered Onaské, "Le Pasant is your flesh; Kinonge is also your flesh. But if our father demands the life of Le Pasant, it must be so. It is just that this dog who has bitten both of us to the bone should be destroyed. Who can effect anything in my nation but me? I speak in the hearing of Manitouabe, of Koutaouiliboe, of

Sakima, and of Nanakouena. I am strong. I thank my father for having declared to me his thought. I thank you, my brothers, for the promise you have made to him. We must either keep it and live in peace, or die."

Monsieur de Cadillac bowed his head.

"It is well," he said. "But remember, Onaské, if you fail to fulfil your promise, you will fall into greater misery than before. I shall have dull ears forever, and will never again entertain thoughts of peace. Tell your people that peace will be concluded only when the satisfaction I demand shall be rendered. Until then they must come here no more. After Le Pasant has been given up to me, you may all come with a high head. I will smooth the way."

Thus the council closed, and the following day the chiefs departed for Michilimackinac.

Our Sieur had demanded the death of the warrior, and, in his own grief and anger, was determined to avenge the fate of his friend the Recollet. Whether during the interval he judged it wiser to be satisfied with the utter submission of the Indians, or whether the spirit of our dear Frère Constantin pleaded with him for mercy rather than justice upon the slayer of the missionary, I cannot say.

Be this as it may, Le Pasant was brought to Le Détroit by the chiefs Sakima, Meyaville, and Koutaouiliboe, who delivered him up to La Mothe in the Place d'Armes of the fort.

It was an interesting and imposing ceremony. Le Pasant, who was seventy years old and very rotund, presented an appearance of terror unusual in an Indian, as he was brought within the palisade by the other chiefs, who were clad in their gaudiest attire.

When Monsieur de Cadillac stepped out of his council room to receive them, Otontagon, or Jean le Blanc, at once advanced to meet him, compelling the old warrior, by a firm grasp upon his shoulder, to come forward also.

"My father," said he, addressing De la Mothe with solemnity, "here is Le Pasant. You have the power to put him to death. He is your slave. You can make him eat under your table like the dog that picks up the bones."

Cadillac regarded the prisoner in stern silence for a few minutes, and then spoke to him with great dignity.

"Here you are, Le Pasant, before your father and your master," he said. "Is this the great chief who was so well related and so highly esteemed? Was it you who ate white bread every day at my table, and drank of my brandy and my wine? Yes. And it was you whom I had cured by my physicians, when you were ill! It was you whom I helped in your need, and took care of your family! And because of these benefits you have killed my people! You who hide yourself and droop your eyes! — was it not you who went every day to the Gray Robe, who was wont to make much of you, and had you eat with him, and taught you? Yet it was you who killed him. There are reproaches, Le Pasant, which slay you; there is no longer life in your heart; your eyes are half dead; you close them; they dare not look at the sun. Go, my slave!"

Le Pasant had been overcome with fear, but this last sentence gave him courage. "Our father is kind to his children who have angered him," he blurted out, and therewith made himself as small as might be, behind the others.

The other chiefs were highly pleased at the clemency of the Commandant.

"Our father is kind," repeated Koutaouiliboe, stepping forward. "We want to come back to Le Détroit; give us again our fields that we have deserted, and we will come to live in peace. The corn at Michilimackinac grows but a finger long, here it is a cubit long."

For answer, our Sieur arose and presented to the chiefs a beautiful belt of wampum, saying, —

"My children, your submission has gained my heart. Your obedience has made the axe fall out of my hand. It has saved your lives, and the lives of your women and children. And you, Le Pasant, why have you fled from me in fear? You deserve to die, but I give you your life because of your submission and obedience. You are as one dead, because you have been given up to justice. But I stay my hand, and let you go to your family."

This leniency of our Sieur's, though generous, proved most unfortunate. In his rage he had promised the Miamis the head of the Outawa chief, and now, when they found that the Bear was permitted to live, they revolted.

They were soon subdued, however, and an envoy of the government having stirred up some trouble among a few dissatisfied settlers at Le Détroit, my brother sent me up to Montreal to present his side of the story to Monsieur de Vaudreuil.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVENTH

AGAIN THE GALLANT BOSTONNAIS

AT Ville Marie I put before Governor Vaudreuil the affairs intrusted to me by our Sieur, and thence proceeded, with as little delay as might be, to Quebec, there to carry out his instructions still further and to await his mails from France. I will not attempt to describe my emotions when, after a four days' canoe voyage down the St. Lawrence, I beheld looming up before me the rugged crag whereon the intrepid Champlain erected the royal stronghold of New France; when I saw the peaked roofs and gilded belfries of the upper town gleaming in the light of the setting sun; when I gazed upon the grim old Castle of St. Louis and saw above it the proud banner of the fleur-de-lis floating to the breeze, even as it does to-day in this good year 1735, and ever shall, I ween.

It was a joy, indeed, to find that my long absence had not turned the hearts of friends from me; to have pressed upon me offers of hospitality and entertainment from high quarters. In the letter I brought from his Excellency it was ordered that I was to be given rooms in the Château, and the best that the old mansion afforded; the Intendant, Monsieur de Beauharnois, in turn most cordially made me free of his table at the Palace.

The Recollets, seeing that I was not disposed to house myself with the great, would fain have me

stay with them in their new monastery beside the church on the Place d'Armes, and I had a score of other invitations.

Nevertheless I chose to go quietly with my brother Jacques to the old residence above the Guyon warehouse, which, with its many associations and its memories of my dear parents, was still home to me, albeit I now found there another generation of Guyons, over whom my brother's wife ruled as "*la bonne mère*," — she who was pretty Louise Neil.

Still comely she was, and most good-natured, albeit now, I hear, there is a deal too much of her in the matter of *avoirdufois*.

For my reception there was a banquet, to which our nearest friends were bidden, and during all my visit Louise strove to her utmost to tempt my palate with the delectable delicacies known to the housewives of New France, since she would have it I was not grown fully strong after my late illness. It was not her fault, good soul, that her *galettes au beurre* and her *croquecignoles*, though truly delicious, were not quite equal to those I had tasted in this house in my boyhood days; since — even my wife (for I have a wife now) — even my wife scarce makes such perfect *croquecignoles* as those which my dear mother was wont to have for me of old when I came home from my studies in the book-room of the *Recollets*.

This I confide to the manuscript before me with the utmost secrecy, however; and if the reader chances to find at this point two of the pages adhering together, he will know the reason thereof. Or, if I must needs explain, well, then, I will set down that my wife has a spirit of her own, and moreover

she is proud of her cookery. Also, like my brother Jacques, I am somewhat lacking in the imperious manner of the elder Guyon, and my wife holds me not in such awe as my good mother held my father; indeed, she holds me not in awe at all, albeit, I will acknowledge, my lightest word has weight with her. Yet this, she says, is a matter of love; and with her answer I am more than content. For if to some it may appear strange that, although I have been her husband many a year, she loves me still, and I am still her lover, yet so it is. And so it would be, even were her skill at making croquecignoles not half so notable as I have found it.

But I have lapsed into the present, whereas I should be writing of some twenty years ago.

On the morning after my arrival at Quebec, having made one or two visits to officials in the interests of La Mothe, I set out, upon Jacques' bay horse Lambreur, for Beauport and the home of my uncle, François Guyon of the Meadows, as he was often called.

The season was September, and as I took the old road out by St. John's Gate, I looked not back at the gray churches and monasteries, the grim Castle and Palace, or the picturesque houses of the town, nor yet upon the yellowing trees of the gardens by the river, but kept my face toward the open country, and urged my horse to greater speed.

Still I knew that the valley of the St. Charles, winding away to the northwest, was fair, and the river where Jacques Cartier laid up his ships shone like silver in the sunlight.

So early is our Canadian autumn, that already the hillsides began to take on a tinge of russet, and across toward the cleft of Montmorenci the maple

groves and thickets were aflame with crimson and gold, as if Nature had lighted a mighty camp-fire and bidden all her children to a harvest feast. But I am getting into the present again; at the time it was not of feasting I thought, and the forests, so gorgeous in their foliage, seemed to me then as so many altars whereon were lighted sacrificial fires to the Most High.

Their splendor too was half veiled in a soft haze, and how gloriously the wealth of color contrasted with the clear blue of the sky, and the violet mists that hung over Cap Tourmente and the distant mountains!

The road had been well travelled all summer, and the hoofs of Lambreur rang a cheery music out of the hard ground.

After an hour's riding I caught sight of the red chimneys and white walls of my uncle's house in the valley. Presently I should be again face to face with François Guyon; I should hear his hearty greeting, and feel the warm clasp of his hand. Here, too, I should find the Lady of Chateauguay, the sweet Babette of the olden time. Yes, she had come back to her childhood's home to help to soothe the last days of my aunt, — for the good Dame Guyon was no more. Barbe, however, had stayed on, I had been told, to comfort the grief of my uncle with a daughter's love. Anon I should see her; should note the sheen of her fair hair, the flush of her cheek, the light of her eyes; should hear her blithe voice speak my name in happy-hearted welcome. But — my spirits sank as I brought myself back from my reverie and reined in Lambreur from the mad gallop to which I had spurred him. The truth confronted me once more.

I should see Barbe at Beauport; I might take her hand in mine for a moment, and even press a kiss upon those white fingers in cavalier fashion; I might spend the afternoon in talking to her; nevertheless, we should be still as far from each other as when separated by the leagues of wilderness that lie between Fort Pontchartrain and Quebec, more apart even than when I came from France and found she had married the noble Le Moyne and was already his widow.

Now it was not the memory of Chateauguay that stood between us; it was a living man. I should find Barbe at Beauport, but I should find her, as she was when I saw her last at Le Détroit, the promised wife of the Bostonnais officer, whom she had released from the blockhouse prison.

This reflection was like a dash of cold water in the face of a man hot with wine. It cooled the exhilaration of my fancy, and sobered me to the realities of life. The landscape lost something of its poetic charm, and took on a garish aspect in the full sunlight of noon.

I went on more leisurely, and my thoughts travelled back to the day when I first met our *Sieur Cadillac* as a suitor for pretty *Thérèse*. At about the same hour I had arrived, and now as I drew rein at the door I recalled how on that day my friend *Robert de Reaume* came hurriedly out of the house, and my young boy cousins clamorously dashed around the corner to greet me.

I remembered how little Barbe ran forth from within and clung to my arm, half shyly, yet with the frank, ingenuous liking of a child.

How strong is the force of association! To-day I looked about for Robert, though I knew him to be

in Montreal, where I had seen him a few days before. The boys were away on the high seas, for they followed the calling of their father.

A silence hung over the place; the yard was deserted. Slowly I dismounted, and stood a moment in indecision upon the doorstone. Should I call, or lead my horse to the stable, and returning, enter unannounced this my second home of former times?

Were they all dead, that such silence reigned? I retained my grasp upon the bridle of Lambreur, and took a step upon the path.

As I did so, there was a faint sound in the house as of some one approaching through the hall; a struggle of some one with the bar that secured the heavy cedar panels; the next moment the door was thrown open, and involuntarily I uttered an exclamation of joy.

For there in the doorway stood the lady of my thoughts! Again Barbe had come hastening to bid me welcome, — Barbe, no longer a child, but the loveliest woman in New France!

Am I so much to blame that in this moment I forgot all but her sweet self; forgot that it was François Guyon I had come especially to see, or so I had told myself! forgot the Bostonnais, and all the world, save that here was Barbe whom I loved, — Barbe, radiant in her youthful beauty with the sunlight falling upon her as if it singled her out, as she stood in the open doorway, the dim interior of the old house forming a charming background to her graceful figure and blushing, piquant face?

“Barbe!” I cried joyously. “Barbe!”

And before I well knew what I was doing, I had caught her in my arms and kissed her.

A moment her beautiful head rested upon my

breast; then, with a little ripple of merriment, she gently pushed me away, her jewelled hand flashed before my eyes, and I felt a light blow on the cheek, like the sting of a gnat, whereat I laughed right heartily.

I tied my horse to a tree opposite to the entrance, and went into the farmhouse with her.

"Normand, how you frightened me!" she said, as she drew me along the passage. "Are you a ghost, or your proper self? A letter from Thérèse told us we might look for you some three weeks hence; we go little to Quebec nowadays, and your brother did not send us word that you were expected earlier."

"There was short time," I answered. "He was apprised by a voyageur only the day before."

I was strongly tempted to kiss her again, while we paused for this conversation. But now I remembered the Bostonnais; and though I could not but be amused at her chastisement of my boldness, I had no mind to provoke her resentment.

With the gayety of a child, she once more put her hand in mine and led me into the hearth-room, the heart of the house, where in the wide chimney glowed a stout pine log even on that day. The people of New France guard themselves well against the chill that sometimes creeps into the dwellings during the early days of the changing leaves, as well as at the budding of the trees; moreover, my uncle Guyon on his last sea voyage had contracted a rheumatism which made him fonder of the "corner of the fire" than he was of old.

For whereas in other times, after his midday meal and pipe of tobacco, he was ever away to his fields or his ship, now he often dozed through the afternoon by the hearth.

Here we found him in his great chair, only half aroused by the slight commotion that followed my arrival.

"Normand, is it indeed you, or am I dreaming of my dear ones of Le Détroit?" he exclaimed, rubbing his eyes, and sitting erect with astonishment.

"Heaven be thanked, it is no dream that I am here, my uncle," I responded, clasping the hand he stretched out to me.

He drew me down to him and kissed me on both cheeks, after the hearty Norman fashion among the men as well as with the women of a family when they meet after a long separation.

"You are well come truly, my nephew," he cried. "Now we will wake the old house up again, and have merry-making and good cheer. Babette, my daughter, order dinner for the lad. Ah, Normand," — here the jovial light died out of his countenance, and he rubbed his eyes again as if a mist had come over them, though his lips still smiled, — "Ah, Normand, 't is, I fear, but meagre comfort we can offer you, after all. You miss the presence of your aunt, boy. I see it by the tristful look of your face. She is gone, and there is small content about the house. You would scarce know it for the same."

"Well I know there is none can fill my aunt Guyon's place, sir," I made answer somewhat hoarsely. "Yet" — here I glanced at Barbe, and from her my gaze strayed around the bright, pleasantly ordered room, — "Yet it would seem to my inexperienced eye, that her daughters, trained in her thrifty, comfort-making ways, keep bravely up the household, even as she would have it."

"Ay, they do excellently for their youth," he

replied with an effort to be cheerful again. "In sooth, they are most tender in their care for me. But, Normand, when in the autumn of his life a man loses the friend (*l'amie*) and companion whom God gave him in the Eden of its springtime; when she, the mother of his children, she who is as the key of his house, is taken from him, — even though he rebels not against Providence, for him ever after the sunshine has lost something of its brightness; and to him the hearth-fire seems to glow coldly, though for others it has a ruddy heat.

"Often enough I sailed away for the Spanish main and into the jaws of danger, with small thought that I left my good wife, Marguerite Marsolet, alone, and with much to worry her. Now that she has left me, I find no comfort anywhere. Tut, give no heed to my complaining. I am an ungrateful old churl to my children married in Beauport, who give me their company daily, and to Miladi here. Come to your dinner, lad, and let us be cheery. Barbe, my dear, pour for your cousin a goblet of wine; and now fill me out another, that I may drink to him good fortune. Saw ever man a fairer cup-bearer, eh, Normand? I am not going to keep her shut up in Beauport, nor must she always remain a widow, eh? So I often tell her, and at last I have brought her round to my way of thinking, I opine."

My uncle winked both eyes at me significantly. It was his way of expressing a confidential attitude, and was most ludicrous.

I was glad to see him thus cast off his melancholy, but I remarked too how, at these last words of his, Miladi of Chateaguay's color deepened, and

I knew he referred to the Bostonnais whom she was soon to wed.

Scarce conscious of the lapse of time, the good man still called me lad, albeit only that morning I had noted some threads of gray among the locks which Barbe once called so black. Seldom did I affect the peruke, though often I wore my hair powdered. On this occasion, however, it had been my fancy to go down to Beauport showing in my attire at least as little change as might be from the time when I was wont to ride there frequently. My gaze turned toward the place where La Mothe stood beside the hearth on the day when I first met him here. Again with the eyes of my mind I saw him, handsome, debonair, ardent, yet with a respectful grace, bending his head to speak in an undertone words of love to my sister Thérèse, whose face sank lower and lower over her tambour frame,—Thérèse, then, to my thinking, the prettiest demoiselle in the world; Thérèse, who was still so fair in her serene, matronly comeliness—but now my eyes turned back to Barbe, and I smiled to myself, for now my ideal of womanly loveliness was—well, it was Barbe.

A Pani woman brought food and put it upon the table. There was a meat pasty, if I mistake not, and the half of a capon, perchance, with sundry relishes. My uncle forced me to sit down to them,—though I had small appetite, both because it was feast enough to be there, with Miladi pressing the dishes upon me, and also because my brother's wife was right, I was not yet altogether robust.

I strove to cover my deficiencies as to hunger, however, by entering into an animated recital of the news of Fort Pontchartrain, and so enlivened

waxed our conversation that ere long my uncle became quite like his whilom self. Indeed, more than once he broke into a breezy laugh, and slapped his thigh in his old sailor fashion, when something pleased him.

"Normand, it has done me good to see you, lad," he said, when I ventured to rise from the board. "It has made me feel a good ten years younger. I will go down to the wharves and look about me. You must stay with us, of course."

"Thanks, my uncle, the interests of Monsieur de Cadillac require that I take up my quarters in Quebec," I made answer. "I must return thither this evening, but, if you will have me, I will ride down to Beauport for an hour or more to-morrow."

"Chut, chut! This arrangement of your staying in Quebec is not to my liking," he grumbled. "Still, do as you think best, only — you must come to us as often as may be."

Ready enough was I to give him this promise.

"Well, well, I will be back ere you are half done with telling Barbe the social gossip of Le Détroit," he continued, getting out of his chair. "It is but just, too, that she should have a chance to question you concerning the doings of Thérèse and the children. Heard you aught of an English officer when you were there, nephew, and of his escape from the blockhouse? And heard you aught of a fair lady who helped him to escape, and chose to consider herself under sentence of banishment from that day forth? Eh bien, it is an ill tide which brings not luck to some harbor, and this tide was more welcome at Beauport than any that ever brought in Spanish galleon or English merchantman. Eh bien, eh bien! My chapeau, Babette, and a kiss,

my dear. Thank you for both. Au revoir, Normand, au revoir."

With a chuckle the old man went out, leaving me to as cosy a tête-à-tête with the Lady of Chateauguay as I had wished for.

After his departure I stood for a moment staring into the fire.

"Sit you here," said Miladi, motioning me to the high-backed chair of my uncle, while she sank into the arms of its companion on the opposite side of the hearth. "Normand, you are pale, you eat scarce anything, for all your lingering over the viands; you must have been more seriously ill than they would admit to me."

"Oh, mayhap I was not a Samson in strength for a while," I made answer lightly; "but now, thank God, my grasp upon my blade is well-nigh as firm as ever it was. My native air, with the whiff of sea breeze that comes up the river now and again, together with the sight of you, madame, will soon prove all the tonic I need."

"A 'bon mot,' cousin. You have improved somewhat in the art of compliment," laughed Barbe, roguishly.

"Perhaps because I have had leisure to study it," I replied simply.

Miladi caught her breath and looked down at the marigolds she had taken from the vase on the table and was wantonly tearing to pieces. Then presently raising her eyes and fixing them upon me, she said, leaning a little toward me, —

"Tell me about it, Normand. Le Détroit, alas, how different it must be without Frère Constantin!"

It being her will to hear, I told her how the Recol-

let had fallen a victim to his friendship for me, and his kindness toward the children of the forest.

There were tears in her sweet eyes and upon her cheeks when I paused, and although I had passed over with but few words the small part I played in the incidents of the day, she returned to it again and again, and beset me with inquiries as to the duration of my illness.

"Ah, Normand, Normand, I did not know," she repeated. "I had come here to care for mother Guyon. Had I known you were lying near unto death at Le Détroit —"

"What would you have done, Barbe?" I could not refrain from asking.

"Ah, what indeed?" she cried piteously, wringing her hands. "My mother! You! My heart would have been torn with anguish. Did you not think hardly of me because I remained away from Fort Pontchartrain during all that distressful time?"

"I missed you sadly; so much I will acknowledge," I said easily. "And I had no intelligence of the loving duty that kept you here at Beauport."

"Pray, what was your opinion of me then?" she insisted.

"My opinion? 'T was what it has always been, — that you are the sweetest and loveliest woman in the world, Barbe."

"Nonsense!" said Barbe; but she gave a little sigh of content, as if a weight had slipped off her spirits.

"And, — and, — what else did you think?" she went on naively.

"I am past the age of day-dreams," I rejoined, coming to myself, "so I only tried to accustom my-

self to the sternness of life's realities. I thought of the gallant Bostonnais officer whose life you saved. I recalled how ardently you begged my help; the spirit with which you braved the anger of Monsieur de Cadillac, both in the council and by compassing the escape that so chagrined him. I thought of the Englishman so eager to return to Quebec when peace comes, that he may claim you; I pictured the wedding festivities here in the old house — ”

“Say no more of the Bostonnais, I beg of you,” broke in Miladi, imperiously.

I looked at her in astonishment.

“Love is a jealous taskmaster,” I answered dryly, “but the war between France and England is not over. The Bostonnais is an honorable man, and if he come not, I dare say, it is not his fault.”

“Pray, why should he come?” cried Barbe, starting to her feet, while her blue eyes flashed and a deep color burned in her cheeks.

“Why?” I echoed, rising too. “Are you not his affianced wife, Barbe? Have you not promised to wed, and to follow him to the south, as a wife must leave her people to go with her husband?”

“No, no, no!” she reiterated vehemently, and sank back into her chair.

“But he acknowledged to me that he loved you; he vowed that his dearest hope was to make you his wife,” I persisted. “Surely he told you?”

Barbe sighed. “Oh yes, the Bostonnais are not such laggards in these matters as are others I have seen,” she said.

“He told you of his love; he asked you to be his wife! You are not betrothed, yet you admitted to me that you loved him,” I continued, perplexed.

Barbe shook her head.

"No, no! It was you who said so," she protested, studying the fragments of the blossoms once more.

"You will not marry the Englishman, then?"

"No, although he is a noble gentleman," she replied softly.

"Barbe, you cannot understand how happy you have made me by telling me this," I exclaimed, striding over to her side.

Miladi still kept her eyes cast down, and toyed with the petals of the flower.

There was a brief silence between us, but the while, her little Spanish slipper tapped the floor impatiently.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHTH

SWEET AS THE ARBUTUS BLOSSOM

“**B**ARBE, are you not coming back again to Thérèse at Le Détroit?” I queried stupidly, at length.

“No, Monsieur Normand.”

“La Mothe no longer cherishes resentment toward you for the chagrin you caused him by freeing the Bostonnais,” I blundered on.

“I am not afraid of Monsieur de Cadillac,” Madame de Chateauguay made answer with spirit. “Yet I —” Here she shot a sidelong look at me. “In truth, Normand, I may as well tell you — of late I have thought much of the convent again. My heart has been so oppressed with loneliness that, the last time I was in Quebec, I went to Mère Angélique de St. Jean, at the Ursulines, and prayed her to receive me among her daughters.”

“Barbe, Barbe,” I cried aghast, and thereupon launched into a torrent of exhortation, begging her to reconsider, to be not over-hasty, — even as I had in the early days of her widowhood.

She listened most demurely, with bent head, and pressing to her lips her little lace handkerchief as if she would choke back a sob; at times her graceful form even shook with emotion.

At length, to my amazement, when I stopped a moment for breath, she broke into a peal of merry laughter.

"Spare your eloquence, cousin," she counselled, brushing her flushed cheek with the filmy bit of lace. "Spare your eloquence, at least until you hear the end of my story.

"The Reverend Mother gave no encouragement to my fancy. She said my vocation was to live in 'the world' (so the good nuns call our part of God's creation, they who dwell upon the borderland of Heaven). Yes, she was very kind; she said I was meant for the happiness of the world; that I would indeed find thorns among my roses, but at least I should have the roses."

"A sensible woman, forsooth!" I ejaculated with satisfaction. "And now, Miladi, I presume you will proceed to gather your roses?"

"I do not know," stammered Barbe, spreading out the little lace handkerchief upon her knees.

I have only a hazy recollection of the sort of dress she wore on that day, but I have since been told it was a purple and gold gown of Atlas silk with a petticoat of mauve Atlas, edged with gold.

"Perchance the worthy lady had heard of the *Bostonnais*," I said savagely. "Roses grow better in the southern provinces than with us! Unless, indeed, you will return to *Le Détroit*, where, as you know well, the beautiful rose of the prairie twines in gay luxuriance around the door arches, and makes of the roughest stake-house a bower of beauty. For me, I have never wished to walk through the rose gardens of life; its sweetest paths have ever seemed to me, Barbe, those we trod together long ago, when we went across the rocky places and into the woods seeking the fragrant *arbutus*. Would you be willing to exchange your roses for the sweet-breathed *May-flower*, Barbe?"

Miladi's head sank lower.

"Mère Angélique said nothing about the arbutus," she answered with averted face; yet there was a laugh in her voice that emboldened me.

"The arbutus has not the thorns of the rose," I went on.

"But it belongs to the May-time, and the May-time is passed," she argued.

"It belongs to all seasons," I insisted. "Have we not found it, with its shining green leaves, living and hardy even beneath our Canadian snows, its sweetness stored in its valiant little heart to be one day given forth to those who await the gift with patience?"

I had seated myself upon an arm of madame's great chair; but as she persistently kept her face away from me, I had addressed myself to her tower of fair hair which she wore in several rows of close curls about her face,—a fashion named (I have since learned) '*à la Maintenon*,' from its adoption by that beautiful and virtuous lady at the time the King first noticed her. But, albeit I had indited more than one rondeau to Miladi's bright tresses, they could give me no index of her mind or humor. Neither was I inclined to bend to her even then. No, she must look up to me.

Accordingly I straightened myself before her.

"Barbe," I said, "listen to me; look at me."

Thereupon she turned toward me, and raised her eyes to mine in the half-roguish, half-deprecating manner with which she had often heard me when she was a child.

"Barbe," I went on, "long ago, when we went a-Maying,—I an awkward boy, you a dainty little demoiselle,—do you remember that you always

searched for the arbutus because I loved it and you would fain give it to me?"

"Yes, yes," she assented readily.

"I will remind you why I loved it. One day of the spring-time, when I was a small lad, I stood in this room watching my aunt Guyon making croquecignoles.

"Of a sudden the door yonder burst open, and there in the doorway stood the bronze figure of an Indian. In his arms was the fairest little child I ever beheld, a baby maid who stretched out her tiny hands to my aunt, as if sent to her by Providence, as indeed was the truth.

"When the Indian was gone, my aunt set the pretty creature upon her knees, and I knelt at her feet, admiring the beauty of the little Bostonnaise, for such Dame Guyon said she was. But to me she was ever just a May-flower from the dark forest; like the arbutus she was sweet and fair, with its own delicate blush, and her bright hair minded me of a ray of sunshine falling upon the forest blossoms.

"I loved her from that day, although, as the years slipped away, I knew not when in my heart affection for the child changed to devotion to the woman. When I saw her paid court to by many cavaliers, I did not understand that my moroseness at the sight arose from jealousy. I did not know that I loved her with all my soul until I learned that another had won this exquisite May-flower. In the same hour wherein I became conscious of the passionate love which had entwined itself around every fibre of my nature, I was confronted with the realization that in honor I must crush it down, must pluck it out and cast it away, or it would become a noisome weed.

"After I had struggled with myself for weeks, I came home. For the gallant bridegroom fate had decreed that the beauty of this May-flower should be but as the fair white snow-blossom he wore upon his breast; its sweetness but enwreathed his memory.

"At this knowledge, the love which I supposed I had plucked out of my heart grew again; I thought to reveal it, to reach out for the May-flower, to vie with others to win it, like the eager young lover of Alpine lands who, outrivalling all competitors, climbs the rocky precipice, to gain the pure and snow-white edelweiss.

"But ah, love abounds in honey and poison! Those who strove against me had so much more to offer than I; and ever I said to myself, 'Some day I will do some noble deed. Then, when I have attained success and honors and wealth, I will go to Miladi,—to Miladi who as a little child went a-Maying with me; who as a young demoiselle, unthinking, and as she might have culled the blooms of her garden plot, gathered the best affections of my heart only to cast them aside; to Miladi, who now, as a widow, graces one of the proudest names of New France, and therefore is not to be lightly wooed nor easily won.

"Time passed," I continued, for Barbe's eyes were fixed upon me with a gracious interest. "I have seen many adventures without having gained distinction, since to face dangers unflinchingly is but the usual lot of the man who, taking his life in his hand, plunges into an unknown country. With our Sieur I have wandered far and wide, yet my boyish dreams of achieving fame and fortune have been in no degree attained. I have been but a

wooer of Nature in the wilderness because of her own loveliness and the spell it cast upon me. Perchance I lacked the greatness of soul that inclines to brilliant deeds. I am still obscure, unknown, and have little wealth. Parnassus has no gold mines, and I have dwelt too much among the clouds. This being so, I had thought never to say what I have said to-day. Dearest Barbe, I thought you betrothed to the Bostonnais. I ever supposed that he won your girlish fancy on the day when first he met you. I surmised that at his coming to Le Détroit the interest he had long ago awakened burst into flame again, since old loves like old brands readily rekindle.

"It is bliss, indeed, to find myself mistaken. Once before I told you of my love, Barbe! Now I tell you that I have worshipped and revered you from the hour when first I knew what it is to love. Will you be my wife, Babette? Will you share my life, humble as it is?"

As I spoke these last words, I took Miladi's hands in mine and drew her up to me.

But when I would have clasped her in my arms, she held me off, her palms resting against my breast, her rosy face averted.

"Phouff! For one whose pride has rendered him so slow to place the decision with me, you are in over-much of a hurry to receive your answer, sir," she said. "I will think over what you have told me, and let you know my mind in the course of a year or two."

Thereat she nodded her pretty head, and looked me in the eyes with a merry glance.

"Be generous, Barbe," I cried. "If I have kept my love for you locked in my own heart, I wronged

no one but myself by so doing. Let me hear my fate, I beg of you! Give me at least a moiety of hope!"

Perhaps it was the look Miladi vouchsafed me, which resigned me to a small degree of patience, as she forced me to sit down again, this time upon the settle, it being nearest, and then seating herself, piled up between us its cushions of silk patchwork and pillows of fir balsam ere she would say more.

"Now listen to *me*, Normand," she began at last, when I had tacitly submitted to endure my suspense with as much fortitude as might be.

"When I was a child, a certain handsome youth was kind to me, and took much trouble for my sake. We were friends in those days. He went away, and I grew to be a tall young maid, and then a woman. After a while he came back, but he was changed. Nothing I did pleased him. He cared not for me himself, it seemed, yet he wished not to have any one else care; he would not have me speak with or smile upon any one."

"An audacious wretch he was, in faith," I interposed contritely. But she shook her finger at me in token that I must be silent.

"I — I would have been as demure as he wished, if by so doing I could have gained his approval," she pursued. "Yet when I dismissed my cavaliers, he took me to task for that also. He set out for the northwest. After a time he came again. He was more like his old self, but soon he went to France. His every action showed that he was indifferent to me."

"Nonsense, Barbe, how *could* that be?" I interrupted once more; but again she checked me.

"There was one," and here her voice shook as even thus indirectly she recalled Le Moyne, — "There was one who loved me well, who had loved me long. My mother, good Dame Guyon, urged me much to marry; I had bought my right to live in New France by a promise to Comte Frontenac that I would take a husband in Quebec. My noble and gallant lover pressed his suit, and I gave my hand and heart to Chateauguay. Yes, Normand, my heart too, honestly and wholly; to have withheld it would have been unworthy, and I willed that he should have it.

"When, for the glory of New France, with a bridegroom's tenderness he kissed and left me, I vowed again, as I had done before the altar, to be to him most true.

"And during the weeks which followed, day and evening I prayed to God, with passionate entreaty, that I might love my husband with all my strength and power of loving. I cried out to the sweet Madonna to obtain for me this favor, only this! It may be, other brides have no need thus to pray; and yet again, perchance many who think themselves the fondest have as much need as had I, since what is called love is so often but another name for selfishness. It may be that in my own pique and pride I was over-hasty, that my marriage was a mistake; I cannot tell. Nevertheless this I feel and know: had Chateauguay lived, I should have loved him faithfully and well; and if a remembrance of any other lover sought hiding in my heart, the hand of God himself would have plucked it out."

As in her earnestness the clear eyes of Miladi met my own, to me she took on an added dignity and beauty; and I blessed God that the heart of

our dear Barbe was as Madonna-like as her perfect face.

"Ay, ay! If women were ever wont to call upon God in their need, there would be fewer broken vows and broken hearts," I murmured meditatively.

"Yes, provided men did so as well," she retorted with a flash of her saucy spirit. "Howbeit" — and again she became pensive — "Le Moyne fell, fighting the English. From the hand of my own people came the blow that seemed to crush out all my youth; the blow that in itself would have separated me from the Bostonnais, so you should have reflected, you foolish Normand! How could I wed an English officer, when the English killed Chateauguay?"

"The Bostonnais may not have been in that campaign," I felt it incumbent upon me to observe.

She heeded not, but went on simply, —

"I resolved to devote my life to the memory of Chateauguay; to remain his widow, though I was but in name his wife. I sought the seclusion of his seigneury on the river bank; I wanted to enter the convent of the Ursulines, but the good mother put me off. You came, but I did not care to see you. Merely to think of you seemed a wrong to Chateauguay, as if he still were living.

"Yet the good mother of the Ursulines said, 'Wait.' Indifferent as I thought myself, as time went on, your quiet sympathy became a pleasant recollection. Gradually, too, my spirits returned, for, O God, I was still so young to be plunged in sorrow! I grew lonely at the seigneury; Beauport and Quebec had their reminiscences; besides, I did not wish to go yet into the gay world. Thérèse was about to set out for Le Détroit to join her husband;

she pressed me to bear her company. It was the one boon I would have asked, the chance to get away into a new world; to leave, if possible, all sad associations; to teach the little children of the wilderness."

"A womanly ideal," I said tenderly.

"But — but — there was one thought that deterred me, I must confess," she admitted; "it was the thought of you, Normand."

She smiled a little at my start of discomfiture.

"Still, I reasoned myself out of this reluctance," she went on. "Chut, Cousin Normand was never my lover," I argued to myself. "It will cure my morbidness to see him. He will scold me and take me to task, as formerly, and our encounters of wit will be as the striking of steel upon flint. Here no one ventures to contradict the Lady of Chateauguay, but Normand will not stand upon any such ceremony."

"What a churl I must have been to have led you to this opinion!" I deprecated with a laugh, all the while eager that she would have done with these details and speak the one word I longed to hear, or, if she would not say it, that she would give me leave to plead my cause anew; for it looked to me as if in this long history she did but seek to put me off.

"Now, monsieur, no impatience," she proceeded with most teasing deliberation, again piling up the barricade of pillows, which I had overturned. "If a woman is ever to be heard out, I should like to know if it is not when a cavalier is waiting for her answer."

"I pray he may not have to wait all his life," I hazarded with a sigh, whereat she was

mightily amused, for of all the innocent coquetry I have ever seen, Miladi Barbe had, I think, the greatest share, nor has she lost it to this day, but continues to coquet with her husband in a most shameless fashion, for a woman of her years, as he has often remarked to me in friendly confidence.

"No, Sir Gravity, I promise you he will not have to wait even until his locks turn gray," she rejoined nonchalantly. "When he gets it, I know not if he will like it over-well."

At this I caught her hands again, and would have taken the answer I wanted from her lips without more ado, but she drew back with dignity, and rising, dropped me a stately curtsy, as if she would leave me altogether.

I took two or three turns about the room, then came and stood before her where she had sunk down once more among the cushions and motioned me to resume my place.

"I will not sit down again until you answer me!" I cried.

"I pray you may not grow over-weary of standing, monsieur," she retaliated naively.

I stamped my foot, and said something under my breath.

"Ah, that is more like the Normand I remember," Miladi exclaimed with the utmost serenity, — "the contrast I needed to the picture in my mind's eye a moment since. *Revenons à nos moutons*, let us return to our viands. Are we not a practical people, we French? We may neglect to return to our loves, our homes, our friends, but we never forget to go back to our dinners."

"Barbe, this levity —" I began, in a deeply offended tone.

"Well, Normand, as I was saying," she pursued serenely, "with that scowl upon your brow, your appearance is quite natural; but when we met at Le Détroit, as I told you there one day, I scarce recognized you. When you spoke to me, it was as if your words had been steeped in a honey wrought by stingless bees, if perchance that might be sweeter than the common kind. The mentor whom I expected to meet was become anon a flatterer and again diffident and distant toward me, though bold and brave ever when there was cause for action."

"It was because I loved you so much, Barbe," I broke out. "I was proud, it is true, I had no mind to be numbered among your discarded suitors, yet often too I laughed at my presumption, in that I sometimes hoped you would leave your manor on the St. Lawrence for a home builded of mud and cedar bark upon the banks of Le Détroit. But now I see that my very love gave me the right to speak, gave you the right to know and to decide. Therefore, although but the clerk of the Chevalier de la Mothe, I ask you to be my wife."

"As I have said, I will think the matter over," rejoined Madame de Chateauguay, with equanimity.

"In God's name, Barbe, torture me no longer," I cried. "Is it 'Yes,' or 'No'?' Tell me, that I may either go or stay."

Seeing that I was veritably at the end of my stock of patience, and really angered, she dropped her bantering in a trice, and demolished the barricade of cushions.

I feigned to take no notice of the ruse, however. Thereupon she sprang to her feet, and coming to me with the docility of a child, laid a hand upon my arm, and looked up into my face.

"Ah, Normand, mon ami!" she said in a voice of captivating tenderness. "I have teased you beyond all endurance, but it was only that in the end I might tell you this. When I was a child, and we went a-Maying together, often, after I had gone skipping on before, I came running back to you, my arms laden with arbutus blossoms, and stretched the sweet flowers out to you, that you might take them. But you paid no heed; you were lost in a day-dream, and did not see that they were for you. And thus I waited in vain until with childish impatience I was fain to fling the drooping buds away."

"I was ever a stupid fellow, of a surety."

"No, no, only blind," she corrected. "You longed for my love, you say, yet you did not see that it was yours for the taking. My heart was yours always, save only during the few weeks when it belonged of right to another."

Thereat, in her impulsive and impetuous fashion, she reached up to me, as I bent my head, and taking my bearded cheeks between her pretty hands, *of herself kissed me squarely upon the mouth.*

Then, alarmed at what she had done, she sought to hide her blushes by flight; but I caught her in my arms.

"Barbe!" I cried, with a rapturous laugh, giving back the kiss, and this time being unrebuffed and unchastised.

Perhaps I was a fool that I took not more than one, or two at the most; but in truth, I did not dare, and could scarce yet believe in my own good fortune. Nathless Miladi has told me since that in this instance she liked me all the better for my diffidence.

Presently we were again sedately seated upon the

settle, but now the cushions of balsam and the down of the wild swan were fallen to the floor, and I hastily shoved them away with my foot, lest it might enter into Barbe's head to straightway build a wall between us again; since she had then, and has still, as many bewitching moods as a day in May.

When we began to look our happiness quietly in the face and to plan for the future, I said half jestingly, yet with an undertone of earnestness, —

"Well, well, Miladi, this is, after all, but a sorry match for you. Were you minded to marry again, you should have had a noble of New France for your husband."

"I shall have a noble husband, never fear," she answered with archness.

"Ah, my dear," I went on gravely, "now, more than ever, I wish for your sake that the prizes of ambition were mine. I would fain be a dashing soldier, reputed for my prowess, my skill as a swordsman; a leader of the troops of the province; the founder of a colony, like Monsieur de Cadillac."

My sweet Barbe laughed, — a merry, happy laugh.

"And will you find it hard to believe, Normand," she declared with a shake of the head, — "will you find it hard to believe that I love you just because you are not the swashbuckling cavalier you would forsooth have me wed, monsieur? I have seen you ready enough with your blade upon occasion; but I scarce think it would add to my happiness to know that you were prone to run your friends through the body upon the lightest provocation. I have seen you brave, prompt to fight for and defend the helpless and those who claimed your love and duty. I do not know that I should admire you more were you ever eager to dash into broils and quarrels, — if you

chafed always for wars and slaughter, as do some. You have not wealth, but would I respect you more if you had gained it, as do many, by cheating the King, by oppressing the people, by tricking the poor Indians out of their peltries and luring them to their ruin with eau de vie? As for the prizes of ambition, Normand, look you, Monsieur de Cadillac is an honest man and an able one; in ability, foresight, and plans for the development of New France, far in advance of these times, I am told. He has received honors, emoluments, gifts from his Majesty, and yet what has been his life? One of disappointment, of bitterness, of fierce antagonisms, of enmities. Have the prizes of ambition in his case been worth what they have cost him? If a man loves place and power, it becomes the duty of a good wife to aid him to attain it, if she can. But, ah me! I would not have you like to Cadillac! A restiveness such as his, as fiery a spirit would weary out my heart. I have not the sweet patience of Thérèse, nor yet the calmness that could soothe so imperious a nature. No, Normand, I would not have you other than you are. I have seen you, a faithful friend, serving the interests of De la Mothe better than your own, because of the boyish pledge of fealty you gave him. I have seen you a tender brother to Thérèse; a man gentle to beast and bird; as just to the red man as to his white brother; a student, preferring your few books and your quill to the pleasures of the wine-cup and the beauty of women, — albeit indeed, sir, in other days your liking for the society of Madeleine de Verchères and one or two other of my friends caused me no small uneasiness.”

“What folly, Barbe!” I interposed vehemently.

"Never did I give a second thought to any woman save you."

"Oh, oh, that is all very well to say now, monsieur," she protested. "I am told that every man save Adam has said the same to his fiancée, and, if one chose to consider the fable of Lilith, perhaps one might imagine Adam himself no more of an exception in this respect than those who have come after him. However, we will let this pass, sir; I would not have you think me jealous now, nor like to be jealous of any woman in the world. And — and — I care not to see you a cavalier of courts and camps, Normand, though La Mothe says you made a most excellent appearance even at Versailles on account of your gentle manners. Once I saw you plunge into the jaws of a fiery death to rescue a poor little Pani slave, and Thérèse wrote me in much more glowing terms than you have described the circumstance, telling me how you faced alone the horde of infuriated savages in your endeavor to save our dear Frère Constantin. Never fear, Normand," she repeated, slipping her hand into mine with simple content, "I shall have as good reason to be proud of my husband as has any woman of New France."

I bent my head and touched her white fingers with my lips.

Is there anything in all the world sweeter to a man than to hear even his failures lauded as if they were victories by the tender voice of the woman he loves?

In the peacefulness of the September evening, as I rode back to Quebec, the earth seemed to me a paradise as my mind dwelt upon the incidents of the afternoon.

The dream of my life had come true. Barbe was my promised wife. Of her own accord she had

kissed me, — as artlessly and with the same innocent frankness that she had been wont to come and kiss me when she was a child. I had looked into her heart and with half-awed delight found myself mirrored there, as one sees his own reflection in the depths of a pure forest spring.

Barbe had laid her hand in mine freely and with confidence. She had called me by that term of endearment, — the sweetest of all, to my thinking, — “mon ami” (my friend), she had said; choosing the name that the good dame of New France gives to her husband, as it is, in turn, the title of honor and affection he bestows upon her.

“Mon ami” — “Ma mie,” so it should be between us evermore.

Under the stars, as I rode on, I vowed to God that as I would be ever her lover, her faithful husband, so also I would be to her the friend she had named me, as she would, I knew, be mine. For had ever man a truer friend than is a devoted wife? And I set down here as my experience of some twenty-eight years, that a firm and tender friendship is the tie of wedded love which best stands the strain of time.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINTH

A ROMANCE TO THE END

THUS it came about that Barbe and I were married at Beauport one golden day of October, as is set down in the parish register. Thus it was that I, who had thought never to be wedded, took back a bride with me to Fort Pontchartrain, through the heart of the Indian summer; and no fairer bride will the blue waters of Le Détroit ever look upon.

Monsieur de Cadillac received us royally. "You went out of my jurisdiction, and therefore eluded the requirement to ask my consent, as Commandant and Seigneur, to your marriage," he said jovially. "Still, I forgive you. Also, Miladi," he went on, turning to my wife; "albeit I might never have quite pardoned the Lady of Chateauguay for having tampered with my gaoler and thus compassed the escape of the Bostonnais, I have only good-will for Madame Barbe Guyon. You have foregone a proud title and a distinguished rank, Miladi, to marry a simple gentleman, but I know that you account yourself still a gainer thereby. Moreover, Normand is not so poor as it may seem, even if 't is said a man should not take a wife until he has a house, and a fire burning. Here upon Le Détroit are the lands I granted him long since, but which he has never redeemed from the wilderness. Now he shall put them under cultivation and build a commodious mansion thereon.

Until it is ready for you, Madame Cadillac and I claim you, Miladi, and your gallant husband as our guests. Now, no protests, my preux secretary."

Thérèse added her plea most strongly, for she was overjoyed to have the companionship of my dear Barbe once more.

Through the winter we remained at the manor, but when the May-time came again we were domiciled in our own home.

Then followed three tranquilly happy years.

We were not rich, yet we had enough to live upon. Barbe would still have drawn a handsome annuity from the seignury on the St. Lawrence, but at our marriage I persuaded her to relinquish it. She had been *châtelaine* by courtesy, the title having passed, at the death of Chateauguay, to his young brother, Jacques, and thence in turn to Antoine, with whom we had to do in the south later.

My uncle Guyon, moreover, made her a handsome allowance, and with the moneys which came to me in the end from my father's property, the sum I had saved from my salary as secretary to our *Sieur*, and the profits from the lands I now cultivated, we had comfort and content. It is strange that in those days, as often since, though I had ever been moderate in the spending of moneys, Barbe was continually chiding me for my extravagance; since, by every convoy from Montreal, I ordered new silken gowns for her, until she declared I would thus waste all my substance. But a lover's purse is tied with cobwebs, and it gave me great satisfaction that, with a lover's pride in her beauty, as her husband I might deck it as richly as I chose.

These years, so peaceful for us, were more troubled for Monsieur de Cadillac. The King re-

fused him the marquisate upon which he had set his heart. The malevolent Red Dwarf whom he had beaten upon the strand in the moonlight seemed ever to dog his footsteps. The sale of brandy to the Indians even in small quantities brought them down upon the colony more than once like packs of maddened wolves, and in the harassments which came to him from the very tribes he had enticed away from Michilimackinac, it often seemed to me that the high-bred De Carheil was avenged.

At length, however, there was another turn in the tide of our *Sieur's* fortunes: he was appointed Royal Governor of the vast province of Louisiana.

All the properties of Fort Pontchartrain were the personal possessions of De la Mothe; but although this was acknowledged, he was forbidden to take anything away with him; neither would the government permit him to sell even the cattle he had brought from Montreal, nor his horse Colin, the only one in the settlement, the plea being that the new Commandant, Monsieur de la Forêt, needed these properties, yet had not the moneys to buy them.

Before the setting in of the winter Thérèse and her children, Barbe and myself, with the little son and daughter who had come to us, left Le Détroit for Quebec, there to await "*mon chevalier*," who had gone to France. He arrived in the spring with a shipload of girls, sent out to become the wives of settlers in the new province; and we sailed with him for Dauphine Island, the seat of government of Louisiana, where, on the seventeenth of May, he was installed as representative of his Majesty in a territory many times greater in extent than the kingdom of the Sun King.

But how sadly disillusioned was my brother in this

wild province! The settlers were for the most part lawless vagabonds, though some bore the names of families distinguished in our Canadian annals. His governorship was fruitful in naught but vexations, and he was not regretful, I trow, when after a few years he was relieved of it and called to Paris.

Fain would I have gone with "*mon chevalier*;" but he bade me remain here in the western world, saying thus I could best serve his interests.

A summer passed, and then the winter, and spring came again. One day I sat upon the gallery of my house on Dauphine Island, which commands a view of the haven of St. Louis de Mobile, a bay that is lost afar off in the wide expanse of the Gulf of Mexico.

It was the month of May, yet the patch of grass I had sown early in the season was already parched; the sandy soil thirsted for rain. Looking backward across the estuary that separates the island from the shore, I beheld an almost unbroken line of oak, bald and black cypress, and the long-leaved yellow pine, and I knew these primeval trees were hung with curtains of the mist-like gray moss which deepens the shade of these dark woods of the south.

The scene, although lonely, was not unlovely; the blackness of the forest contrasted with the blue of the sky and the sparkling waters of the bay; the silver moss which I had brought from the woods and hung upon the rafters of the gallery, together with the vines I had planted, made a pleasant screen against the sunlight.

"Almost a year has passed since our *Sieur* sailed away," I soliloquized, and thereat fell into a reverie wherein there arose before me an air-castle that far eclipsed the glories of the ancient Château of St. Louis, within whose shadow I first encountered the

dashing Chevalier de la Mothe. I saw my brother returning to us rich, powerful, the lord of all New France!

Under the spell of the fancy and of the balmy air of the forenoon, and lulled no doubt by the buzzing of the honey-bees about the vines, I must have fallen asleep.

How long I slept, I cannot tell, but when I awoke I thought I must be dreaming still. I rubbed my eyes and looked again. Yes, assuredly, upon the horizon was a fair frigate with her sails set making for the harbor, with the sun shining full upon her white pinions, and turning her masts and rigging to ropes and spars of gold.

"A ship from France!" I cried, starting to my feet, "a ship from France, and she was not due for ten days!"

At this moment a cannon-shot from the fort announced that the vessel was sighted. An answering boom came to us across the waters,—a greeting from the Old World to the New.

"A ship, ma mie, I am off to the quay," I called to Barbe, who sat within doors, in the cool of the salon, teaching some intricate stitch of needlework to our oldest daughter, Thérèse.

"The sun is hot, mon ami, and may give you a giddiness in the brain," protested my wife.

"My faith, I would risk being stricken down rather than be absent from the coming in of a ship," I rejoined with enthusiasm; and clapping my chapeau upon my head, I sallied down to the Esplanade.

When I again turned my steps homeward, it was long past the hour of the usual light mid-day meal, and I had broken my fast in the morning only with

a small bit of galette au beurre and a dish of late strawberries.

Nevertheless it was not the need of food which had rendered me dazed and ill, nor yet the rays of the sun. When I reached the gallery once more, I sank down upon the bench in my favorite corner, and flung my hat upon the ground with a murmur of deep despondency.

Barbe, who must have felt rather than heard or seen my return, came hurrying from the other end of the house, crying joyfully, —

"You have missives from France, of course. How fares the *Sieur Cadillac*, and to what good post has the Regent appointed him?"

"But, *Normand*," she continued, catching sight of my face, — I had been mopping my brow with my handkerchief under pretence of the heat, — "Normand, what ails you, what advices have you? *Thérèse*?"

"*Thérèse* is well, at least as to bodily health," I responded quickly.

"And *Monsieur de la Mothe* — he is not dead?"

"He is worse than dead," I made answer in desperation; "he is a prisoner in the Bastile."

"A prisoner — the Bastile!" my wife repeated with a gasp of horror. Then, recovering herself, she laid a caressing arm about my shoulders, as if her love would ward off from me all sorrow.

"Think of it, *Barbe*!" I exclaimed. "My dear chevalier is shut up in the living tomb, where so many political prisoners are buried, lost to their families and friends forever."

"But of what offence is he accused?"

"He understands not. Mayhap some spite of his enemies here in the province."

"Our poor Thérèse, may God comfort her!" said Barbe, softly. "What will you do, Normand?"

"Do?" I broke out, starting up. "I will gather together whatever moneys I possess; I will go to France, and by my voice, my gold, my sword, if it can help, I will struggle for the release of my brother La Mothe. I will lay down my life for him, if need be, but he shall be freed from that awful prison, whose only echoes, I am told, are clanging chains and human sighs."

"Yes, go, Normand," cried Miladi, with a self-forgetfulness truly heroic; "go, and if you have not enough of lucre, take all that is mine also."

Thus, when the frigate returned shortly with a cargo of tobacco, I sailed as her only passenger, carrying with me whatever of coin or bullion I had, and also the generous legacy which Barbe had received from her adopted father, François Guyon.

The sum of all these I spent to secure the release of our Sieur Cadillac from the accursed Bastile, and was thankful to Heaven that I accomplished the same.

Fortunately for his content, La Mothe thought, as did Madame Cadillac as well, that the gold I brought him was gained by the sale of some part of his lands. Nor did I undeceive them.

He retired to St. Nicholas de la Grève, and thence to Caumont, his ancestral home; and after a short sojourn there with "mon chevalier" and Thérèse, I recrossed the seas, returning, unknown to Cadillac and my sister, with an empty purse and no prospects.

Soon, however, I obtained a minor official position under Bienville, brother of Henri le Moyne; and although it was a bitter potion, I never regretted my course in this matter, nor did Barbe, I know. The

days of straitened means which followed did but unite our hearts more closely, and our children are, mayhap, all the better for having been reared with simple tastes. Moreover, I cannot feel that I did them injustice, since there is left for them the fine tract of land upon Le Détroit which my brother De la Mothe gave me, free of the right of homage, and for which I have the written concessions, duly signed and witnessed.

Now, too, our fortunes are much improved by reason of the fact that the rich lands near Lake Pontchartrain wherewith Governor Bienville requited my services are close to the site whereon he has founded the city to be named La Nouvelle Orleans, in compliment to the Regent of France; for ended are the glorious days of the Sun King.

On this plantation we now live. For a time I could not cultivate it, owing to a lack of laborers; but the company having brought over a cargo of blacks, I bought a score of them, and since then have given attention to such crops as the government will permit us to raise, — namely, rice, indigo, tobacco, and cotton.

Thus in this southern country we have prospered. Our home faces the river; never, I think, would I be happy in a habitation whence I could not look out upon a stretch of beautiful water. All through the summer night the mocking-bird sings entrancingly among the magnolia and orange trees that surround the dwelling, — a long, low structure of timber and adobe, or sun-dried brick, with a roof of grasses, wherein are interwoven the tendrils of many blossoming plants, so that often it is all abloom, like a parterre.

Around the cypress pillars of the gallery twine

luxuriant climbing roses. In Barbe's garden the air is sweet with the breath of the great variety of flowers, which in this climate unfold with a tropical profusion; and even as I write, there comes to me on the breeze the intoxicating fragrance of the white jasmine. The palisade, also of stout cypress wood, is overshadowed here and there by the dark plumes of the palmetto, the paler green of the banana-tree, and the gray-tinted foliage of the oak. In the near-by orchard grow fine pomegranates, peaches, figs, and pears, while around about, almost as far as the eye can reach, extends my rich farm.

Within, the house is brightened by the happy faces of young people, — a fair half-dozen, ranging in age from our eldest son, who reached his majority awhile ago, to the little Babette, who is as like to Barbe in her childhood as is one sweet spray of arbutus like to another.

As the years pass, however, it seems to me that ever my Barbe grows more beautiful, and so I tell her.

Thereat she laughs, and shows me how the elves of time have stolen the gold from her hair, leaving in its place a sheen of silver; and how the first silken gowns I bought her will not now meet by a good two inches around her ample waist, the fabrics of Atlas which, by my order, were sent down for her from Quebec to Le Détroit, and which, woman-like, she has treasured to this day.

But what though 't is as she says! If her soft hair wants something of its olden brightness and luxuriance, and her whilom youthful grace is merged in a matronly comeliness, still to-day she is far handsomer than she has ever been.

For with the coming of every little child to our

home there has come to her face an added loveliness of expression, and to her heart a deeper tenderness; so that even to my fond remembrance the charms of our violet-eyed demoiselle, the belle of New France, pale before the beauty of Madame Barbe Guyon, my wife and the mother of my children.

Some years since, Barbe and I made a voyage unusual in extent, even for these days of long cruises, when ladies are often as adventurous as the men.

It came about that I must go north, and she sailed with me. We went to Acadia and also to the English province of Massachusetts Bay, to the town of Trimountain, or Boston, and to Orange. For it had ever been in my heart to take my wife to see the land of her birth, and albeit she had never spoken the wish, I knew that she hoped sometime to obtain a clue to her true name and parentage.

A child carried off by the Indians! Alas! it was too common a story to be remembered all these years, if, indeed, it could ever have been traced at all.

The search undertaken for Miladi's sake availed nothing; and, save for her disappointment, I am as well content. My aunt Guyon ever maintained that the parents of our English demoiselle were gentlefolk, and I believe she was right.

Yet, whatever their station, I know for certain that my dear Barbe belongs to the "vraie noblesse" which numbers those of virtuous thoughts and deeds, gracious manners, and unselfish, loving hearts. Moreover, such beauty as is hers blooms not from any wayside weed.

We went to Quebec, and Beauport, too; but when I fain would have Barbe continue on with me to Le Détroit, she said, —

"No, no, Normand, I cannot go back to the Colony on the Strait where we were so ideally happy. I cannot go back to miss Thérèse from the manor; to see another in the place of the Chevalier de la Mothe. I should regret the old days too keenly."

Therefore I proceeded alone to Fort Pontchartrain. But all my efforts to secure for "mon chevalier" the price of even a small part of his lands were unsuccessful. Of his vast property upon the majestic river, there remains to his children not the value of a sou.

The revenge of the Red Dwarf, the prediction of the witch of the Castle of St. Louis, the warning of the missionary, have come to pass in all points save one: the English have not obtained possession of the Gateway of the Lakes, nor will they ever, I ween. Neither will I believe that the fleur-de-lis will be torn down, or that another standard than the banner of the Bourbons will ever float over Le Détroit.

And how fared it with our Sieur Cadillac during this period? After a time the king's ministers, perchance in reparation for his unjust imprisonment, gave him the governorship of Castel-Sarrasin; but being deposed ere long in favor of a native of the town, he took up his abode in a grim old château on the Garonne, where, alas! his eventful life came to a close some five years since, and where my sister, Madame Cadillac, still resides with her children.

In his day, my dear chevalier was a gallant figure of New France. He had the courage of a great leader, and was ever honorable, honest, and loyal to the service of the King. Passing over my own allegiance and affection, which he held from my youth, I will only say that, notwithstanding his faults, he was of a noble nature, as is proved by the devoted respect

and affection which his wife, my sweet sister Thérèse, ever gave him.

Of her, in turn, were his parting words to me when in the home of his youth I took leave of him, — a last adieu, although we knew it not.

“Normand,” he said, “I returned to the Old World poor as when I first left it. Life has given me honors, fortune, power, yet only to speedily snatch them away. Nevertheless my repining is checked, for Providence has spared to me that which so greatly weighs down the balance, — the love and companionship of my dear Thérèse. I have been both a cavalier and a sailor, a free lance, a royal governor, and then, again, a wanderer. I thought to make Ambition my guide, but the jade is torment enough for an enemy. My life has been a romance, abounding in the perils, strife, and picturesque incident which belong to the fascinating wilds of New France; the romance of a soldier of fortune. And numbering from the chapter wherein is set down my first visit to Beauport, from every page thereafter smiles forth upon me the fair face of my wife, Thérèse Guyon, — Thérèse, who in loving duty has followed me through many rough ways, even as when, indifferent to hardship, she came across three hundred leagues of wilderness to make for me the first white man’s home upon the banks of the beautiful Détroit.”

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